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THE MEMOIRS

OF THE CONQUISTADOR BERNAL DIAZ DEL CASTILLO

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

CONTAINING A TRUE AND FULL ACCOUNT

OF THE

DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST

OF

MEXICO AND NEW SPAIN

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL SPANISH BY

JOHN INGRAM LOCKHART, F.R.A.S.

AUTHOR OF "ATTICA AND ATHENS"

IN TWO VOLUMES

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ERRATA.

P. 41, l. 32, *for* then, *read* there.
165, 19, *for* Guanaca, *read* Guaxaca.
199, 15, *for* with, *read* and.
345, 38, *omit* to be.
354, 22, *for* forgot, *read* fotget.
366, 6, *for* enbonpoint, *read* embonpoint.

CONQUEST

OF

MEXICO AND NEW SPAIN.

CHAPTER CXXXVII.

How the whole of us marched towards Tezcuco, and what happened to us on our way there.

When Cortes found himself so well provided again with muskets, powder, crossbows, and horses, and observed how impatient the whole of us, officers as well as soldiers, were to commence the siege of the great city of Mexico, he desired the caziques of Tlascalla to furnish him with 10,000 of their troops to join us in the campaign of Tezcuco, as this was one of the largest towns of New Spain, and next in importance to Mexico. The elder Xicotencatl (now called Don Lorenzo de Vargas), assured him that not only the 10,000, but many more troops were at his service, and that the brave cazique Chichimalatecl, our particular friend, would himself march out at their head. Cortes returned him the most sincere thanks, and, after having reviewed the whole of his troops, whose exact number[1] I have forgotten, we commenced our march on the fourth day after Christmas of the year 1520.

The first night we quartered in a township which was subject to Tezcuco, and were provided with everything we required. From this place we arrived on the Mexican territory, where, if possible, we observed still greater precaution, and always had four of the horse-patrol and an equal number of foot in advance to explore the defiles, as we had been informed on our march that a very formidable mountain pass had been blocked up by large trees which the enemy had felled when notice of our approach was received in Mexico and Tezcuco. During this day's march, however, we met with no kind of obstacle, and quartered ourselves for the night about twelve miles further on, at

the foot of a mountain. Here we found it very cold, but kept a sharp look out. With break of day we continued our march further up the mountain, and speedily arrived where the mountain pass had been blocked up by felled trees, and a deep hollow had been made; but as we had great numbers of Tlascallans with us, we soon managed to clear away the trees, and to fill up the hole, so as to enable our cavalry to pass over, a company of crossbow-men and musketeers marching in advance. We now ascended the mountain for some time, and then descended a little, until we came to a spot whence we had a fine view of the lake of Mexico and its large towns standing in the midst of the water.

As soon as we beheld this city again, we thanked the Almighty for having conducted us thus far, and we promised ourselves to act more prudently in this campaign against Mexico than we had done previously. On descending this mountain, we observed numbers of signal fires about Tezcuco and the townships subject to it, and when we had arrived at another formidable pass, we came up with a large body of Mexicans and Tezcucans. They were waiting our arrival near a bridge which had been half burnt down, the water being of considerable depth. We, however, soon put the enemy to flight, and got safely on the opposite side, though our enemies still continued to yell fearfully from out the defiles and other places where we could not get at them, but that was all they did.

Although it was impossible for our cavalry to manœuvre here, our friends the Tlascallans did not remain inactive, for they spread themselves about the country, and carried off everything they could lay their hands on, although Cortes had ordered that no hostilities should commence unless the enemy attacked us first; the Tlascallans, however, maintained that if these Tezcucans had been friendly inclined towards us, they would not have marched out against us as far as the bridge to stop our further progress.

The night following we took up our quarters in another township under Tezcuco. Here the whole of the inhabitants had fled; nevertheless we took every precaution, as we were almost sure we should be attacked by a vast body of Mexicans who were lying in wait for us in another mountain pass; this we had learnt from five Mexicans whom we had taken prisoners at the bridge just mentioned, but we afterwards heard that they had not dared to run the risk of an engagement with us, and had, consequently, marched off their troops; besides which, at that time, the Mexicans and Tezcucans were not upon the best of terms with each other; and the smallpox was raging throughout the whole

of this district, so that they were not able to bring many warriors into the field; while our recent victories over the Mexican garrisons of Quauquecholla, Itztucan, Tepeaca, Xalatzinco, and Castilblanco, had spread terror through the country, and it was firmly believed that the united forces of Huexotzinco and Tlascalla had joined us in this campaign.

The spot where we had encamped for the night may have been about eight miles from Tezcuco, which we left at break of day, and observed every military precaution as we passed along. We had scarcely proceeded a couple of miles when our scouts came in with the glad tidings to Cortes that about ten Indians were approaching, all unarmed, and bearing a species of golden banner: neither had they, on passing by any dwellings or plantations, been assailed by such terrible yells as on the day before; but everything wore the aspect of peace. Cortes and the whole of us were delighted with these good omens, and we halted for some time to rest a little. Seven distinguished Tezcucans now came up, carrying a golden banner at the point of a long lance, which they lowered, in token of peace, as they approached nearer to us. When they had arrived in the presence of Cortes, who had Doña Marina and Aguilar standing at his side, they addressed him as follows: "Malinche, our lord and master Coanacotzin,[2] the king of Tezcuco, has sent us to you to beg of you to take him into your friendship. He awaits you in his city of Tezcuco; and, in token of peace, he sends you this golden banner: at the same time he requests you will command your brothers and the Tlascallans not to commit any depredations in his country, and wishes you to take up your quarters in his city, where he will provide you with everything you may require."

These persons likewise assured us that the troops which lay in wait for us in the defiles and mountain passes were not of Tezcuco, but the whole of them were Mexicans sent out against us by Quauhtemoctzin. Cortes and the whole of us were overjoyed at the message which the king of Tezcuco had sent us. He embraced the ambassadors and three of them most affectionately, for they were relatives of Motecusuma, and well known to most of us as having been officers of that monarch. Our general then ordered the Tlascallan chiefs into his presence, and strictly enjoined them not to allow their men to commit any depredations in this country, nor injure any one, as we were at peace with the inhabitants. These orders they obeyed, though they were not so very particular as to the manner in which they procured themselves provisions, as every house had a plentiful supply of maise, beans, dogs, and fowls.

Cortes, however, suspected the Tezcucans were not in earnest in sueing for peace, and deliberated with our officers on the subject, who were all of the same opinion, and observed that if the Tezcucans had been honestly inclined they would not have come in so great a hurry, and would have brought provisions with them. Cortes, nevertheless, accepted of the golden banner, which may have been worth about eighty pesos; he thanked the ambassadors, and assured them that it was not our custom to ill use any of our emperor's subjects; on the contrary, they always experienced the kindest treatment from us. This they themselves would find to be true, if they abided faithfully by the peace they now sought of us; he had also commanded the Tlascallans not to injure any of the inhabitants; but as the Tezcucans on our retreat from Mexico had murdered upwards of forty Spaniards and 200 Tlascallans, and plundered them of all they possessed, he must demand of their king Coanacotzin, and of the caziques of Tezcuco, restitution of the stolen property, and if they delivered up this to him he would pardon the murder of the Spaniards, whom they could not restore to us again. The ambassadors replied, that they would faithfully communicate all this to their monarch, but assured us that the teules he spoke of were, by order of Cuitlahuatzin, all sent to Mexico with everything they had possessed, and were there sacrificed to Huitzilopochtli.

Cortes, not wishing to intimidate them, made no further reply, but desired one of them to remain with us and dismissed the others in peace.

The next place we came to was one of the suburban villages of Tezcuco, but I have forgotten its name. Here we were furnished with excellent provisions and every other necessary. On our road we destroyed some idols which we found in a large building where we stopped. The next morning we entered Tezcuco itself, and it immediately struck us as singular that we should neither meet with women nor children, but only with grown up men, who all appeared very shy of us, as if they were about to commence hostilities. Notwithstanding this we took up our quarters here, but Cortes gave strict commands that none of the officers or men should stir out of the large courtyards adjoining our quarters, and to be altogether upon their guard, as the inhabitants did not appear very peaceably inclined, and it was necessary we should first see how matters stood.

Alvarado and Oli with several soldiers, among which number I was myself, were ordered to take possession of the great cu, which was very high, and to take with us twenty musketeers as a guard. From which place we were narrowly to watch the town and lake, of which we had an

excellent view from this height. We had no sooner arrived at the top of the temple than we espied the inhabitants of this and the surrounding townships running off with all they possessed; some fleeing to the mountains, others again concealing themselves in those parts of the lake which were thickly grown with reeds; the lake itself being crowded with large and small canoes.

Information of this was immediately forwarded to Cortes, who then determined to seize the king of Tezcuco, who had sent him the golden banner, but was informed by the papas, whom he had despatched to call their monarch, that he had fled with several distinguished personages to Mexico.

In this way the first night passed away, during which time we kept a vigilant look out, posted our sentinels in all directions, and made frequent patrols. The next morning, very early, Cortes sent for the chief authorities of the town, of whom many were opposed to the runaway monarch, as they were at issue with him on various points respecting the privileges he exercised in governing the town. When these made their appearance, he desired them to detail every circumstance to him, and inquired of them how long Coanacotzin had been king. They replied, that Coanacotzin, in order to raise himself to the throne, had murdered his elder brother, the former regent; and that this was done in secret understanding with Cuitlahuatzin, who had attacked and driven us out of Mexico after the death of Motecusuma; but that there were other persons in the town who had a nearer claim to the crown of Tezcuco, particularly one young man, who was indeed the rightful heir. This young man shortly after became a convert to christianity, and was baptized with great solemnity by father Olmedo, and named after his godfather, Don Hernando Cortes.[3] He was the lawful son of the former prince of Tezcuco, Nezahal Pintzintli.[4] He was, therefore, without any further delay raised to the throne, and installed with all due solemnity, to the great satisfaction of the inhabitants, who obeyed the new king with the best of good will. That, however, he might be thoroughly confirmed in our holy religion, learn the art of governing, and the Spanish language, Cortes gave him for stewards the bachelor Escobar, and Antonio de Villareal, who was married to the beautiful Isabella de Ojeda. The brave Pedro Sanchez Farsan, whose wife was the courageous and excellent Maria de Estrada, was appointed commandant of the town, and he was particularly cautioned not to allow the king to have any communication with the Mexicans. This prince subsequently rendered us the greatest services; and he was greatly esteemed and beloved by his subjects. The first

thing Cortes required of him at present was a sufficient number of hands to assist us in launching the brigantines when they should be completed, and to lengthen and deepen the canals where they were to be launched; he then informed the king and chief personages of Tezcuco for what he intended these vessels, and of his determination to inclose Mexico on all sides. They not only declared their willingness to co-operate with us, but even sent messengers to the neighbouring townships, inviting them to seek our friendship, subject themselves to our emperor, and declare war against Mexico.

The whole of our troops were now divided into companies, to each one was assigned some particular station, which, indeed, was very necessary, as Quauhtemoctzin sent out from time to time numbers of large pirogues and canoes, to see whether we were off our guard or not.

About this time several tribes which were subject to Tezcuco came to sue for peace with us and beg forgiveness, if we thought they had been any way implicated in the late murders of our countrymen. Cortes received them most kindly, and took them into his friendship. The building of our brigantines was now rapidly continued, and there were every day from seven to eight thousand Indians employed to lengthen and deepen one of the canals. As we had an equal number of Tlascallans in our service, who greatly desired to heap up honour for themselves in assisting us against the Mexicans, Cortes easily persuaded them to accompany him in an expedition against Iztapalapan, through which town we had passed on our first march to Mexico. Cuitlahuatzin, the king of this township, had been raised to the throne of Mexico, after the death of Motecusuma, and the inhabitants had done us considerable damage, and were continually committing their depredations on the townships of Chalco, Tlalmanalco, Amaquemecan, and Chimalhuacan, because these had entered into alliance with us. We had now been twelve days in Tezcuco without having achieved any thing worthy of mention, and therefore determined to open the campaign against Iztapalapan.

CHAPTER CXXXVIII.

How we marched against Iztapalapan; Cortes taking along with him Alvarado and Oli; while Sandoval was left behind to protect Tezcuco.

The expedition against Iztapalapan was principally undertaken to please the Tlascallans, so great was their desire to try their strength

again with the Mexicans on the field of battle. Their patience was almost exhausted, and they longed to revenge the death of their countrymen who were slain in our disastrous flight from Mexico. To this was likewise added, that the Tezcucans could scarcely supply the necessary provisions for so great a body of men, and it was not our interest to be too burdensome to them.

Cortes commanded this expedition in person, accompanied by Alvarado, Oli, thirteen horse, twenty crossbow-men, six musketeers, and two hundred Spanish foot. These troops were joined by the whole of our Tlascallan friends, and twenty of the Tezcucan chiefs, all relations of the Prince Don Hernando, and enemies to Quauhtemoctzin.

After the necessary arrangements had been made, we commenced our march towards Iztapalapan, which lies above sixteen miles from Tezcuco, and, as I have before stated, half the town stands in the lake itself. We marched forward with every military precaution, as the Mexicans had posted their scouts in all quarters to watch our movements, so that they might be able to throw a body of troops into any place we might threaten to attack.

On this occasion again they had received due information of our design, and they had strengthened the garrison of Iztapalapan with above 8000 warriors; so that we found a considerable army ready to receive us in front of that town. The enemy bravely stood their ground for a considerable length of time, but at last gave way, so vigorously did we set upon them with our horse, crossbows, and muskets; while our friends of Tlascalla rushed upon them like so many furious dogs. The Mexicans now retreated into the town itself, where we pursued them; but this it appears was by a preconcerted plan, and had almost proved fatal to us. The enemy retreated before us, threw themselves into their canoes, and concealed themselves, partly in the houses which stood in the water, and partly among the reeds which grew in the lake. By this time it was quite dark, and as the enemy remained perfectly quiet, we contented ourselves with the victory we had gained, and neglected to observe our usual military precautions. While we thus thought ourselves secure, and least of all imagined we were threatened by any danger, so vast a flood of water rushed all of an instant into the town, that we must undoubtedly have all been drowned, if the distinguished Tezcucans who were with us had not given us timely notice to quit the houses. The enemy had cut through two dams, and thereby at once inundated the town; so that many of our Tlascallan friends, who were not accustomed to deep waters, and consequently unable to swim, were drowned. We others likewise got a thorough

wetting, lost our powder, and were obliged to retreat from the town in all haste, with great risk of our lives. And thus, with our clothes completely drenched, with empty stomachs, and shivering with cold, we passed a most terrible night, the enemy continually assailing our ears with derisive shouts and horrible yells from their canoes and houses. But something still worse awaited us, for the inhabitants of Mexico, who had been apprized of our perilous situation, now came advancing towards us in vast numbers, both by land and water, and fell upon us the next morning with such dreadful fury, that it was only by exerting ourselves to the utmost we were able to make a stand against them. In this engagement we lost two Spaniards and one horse, and great numbers of our men were wounded. By degrees, however, the enemy became less furious in their attacks, and we were thus enabled to retreat to Tezcuco, not a little annoyed at the defeat we had sustained. If we did not reap much honour for ourselves in this last battle, it must be remembered we had lost all our powder. We had, however, taught our enemies to respect us a little, for they remained perfectly quiet after our retreat to Tezcuco, and occupied their time in dressing their wounds, burying the dead, and repairing the houses which had been damaged. I must now return to Tezcuco, where in the meantime ambassadors had arrived from other townships to sue for peace.

CHAPTER CXXXIX.

How ambassadors arrive in Tezcuco from three neighbouring townships, to sue for peace, and to beg forgiveness for the murder of several Spaniards who had fallen into their hands; and how Sandoval marched to Chalco and Tlalmanalco, to assist the inhabitants there against the Mexicans.

The second day after our return to Tezcuco, three of the neighbouring townships sent to Cortes, to sue for peace, and beg forgiveness, for having put some Spaniards to death; they strove to exonerate themselves from all guilt, by stating that they had been compelled to march against us by command of Cuitlahuatzin, who had ascended the Mexican throne after Motecusuma's death; they had merely done, they said, what they could not avoid, and had sent the Spaniards they had captured, with their horses, and everything else belonging to them, to Mexico. These townships, which thus came to sue for peace, were

Tepetezcuco and Otumpan; the name of the third I have forgotten. This was the same Otumpan where the memorable battle took place which we fought against the flower of the Mexican army.

The inhabitants of these townships were terrified when they heard of our march against Iztapalapan, and concluded they might now also expect a visit from us; and though they would have been pleased to hear that we had perished in the water, or had been worsted in the last battle, yet they considered it more advisable, by seeking peace of us, to avert the castigation they feared.

Cortes, seeing he could not do better under the present circumstances, granted them a pardon for the past, but made them give a solemn promise to remain faithful to our emperor in future, to obey us in everything, and never again to enter into an alliance with Mexico; to all of which they faithfully adhered. After this, ambassadors arrived from another township, which lay in the midst of the lake, and was called Mizquic, though we called it Little Venice. The inhabitants of this place had never been upon intimate terms of friendship with the Mexicans, and now utterly detested them. An alliance with these people, from their situation in the midst of the lake, was of the utmost importance to us, and we also flattered ourselves we should, through them, gain the friendship of the other townships which lay on the lake. These ambassadors accordingly were most courteously received by our general, and he dismissed them with the most flattering assurances of our friendship and protection.

During this interview Cortes received information that a large body of Mexican troops were marching against the four townships which had been the first to solicit our friendship. The inhabitants there durst not venture of themselves to bid any defiance to the enemy, but intended to fly to the mountains, or seek refuge with us in Tezcuco. They begged so hard for assistance, that Cortes at length complied with their request, and marched thither with twenty horse, two hundred foot, thirteen crossbow-men, and ten musketeers, accompanied by Alvarado and Oli. These towns lay about nine miles from Tezcuco, and were threatened with total destruction by the Mexicans for having concluded peace with us. In particular they were afraid of losing the crops of maise in front of the lake, which were now ready for harvesting, and from which the inhabitants of Tezcuco and the four townships had thought to supply us. The Mexicans declared they were coming to cut this maise, as it was their property, and those townships had always till then cultivated those lands for the papas of Mexico; and indeed many lives had already been lost in disputes respecting these fields.

Cortes, being now well acquainted with the true state of the case, sent word to the inhabitants of those places that they had nothing to fear, but to remain quietly at home, and send him word when they were desirous of harvesting their maise crops. He would then despatch an officer, with several horse, to protect the reapers. With this they were perfectly satisfied, and we returned to Tezcuco.

When we found that our stock of maise was nearly all gone, we sent notice of it to those townships, and they immediately commenced reaping their crops; and we marched thither to protect them, with ten horse, one hundred foot, and a few musketeers and crossbow-men, besides the Tlascallan troops, and we took up our position on the maise plantations.

I myself was twice present on these expeditions. On one occasion we had a very sharp skirmish with the Mexicans, a large body of whom had arrived in upwards of 1000 canoes, and secreting themselves among the maise plantations, had commenced carrying off our allies. We instantly fell upon them, and though they fought courageously, yet we compelled them to take to their canoes again. In this skirmish we had one man killed and twelve wounded, of the Tlascallans from fifteen to twenty were killed, and five were carried off alive.

The day following this skirmish we learnt that the townships Chalco and Tlalmanalco, with their dependent villages, were desirous of making peace with us, but were prevented from doing so by the Mexican garrisons stationed there. They complained bitterly of the treatment which they suffered from them; their wives were dragged away, and if handsome were often violated in the presence of their parents and husbands.

About this time our carpenters in Tlascalla had proceeded so far with the building of the brigantines, that the timber was ready to be put together; we were therefore very awkwardly situated, from being so closely bound to Tezcuco, where we had no time to make any arrangements for transporting the brigantines hither; for now the inhabitants of this township, then those of Mizquic, or Little Venice, then again others which stood in alliance with us, came to beg assistance against the Mexicans; besides this, many of our Tlascallan friends longed to return home with their booty, consisting in gold, salt, and other matters, but durst not venture, on account of the insecurity of the road, as the Mexican troops were spread in all directions.

Under these circumstances, Cortes deemed that the inhabitants of Tlalmanalco and Chalco, before all others, required our more immediate assistance, that they might be enabled to form an alliance with us. The other townships might defend themselves as well as they could for the

present, as it would not do to leave Tezcuco without any troops; indeed the utmost vigilance was necessary in that town. Lugo and Sandoval therefore received instructions to march out, with fifteen horse, two hundred foot, a few crossbow-men and musketeers, besides our friends of Tlascalla. They were to dislodge the Mexican troops from Chalco and Tlalmanalco, and clear the road leading to Tlascalla and Vera Cruz, along which the enemy had stationed small detachments.

Information of all this was previously conveyed to the inhabitants of Chalco by some trustworthy men of Tezcuco, that they might fall upon the Mexicans at the same moment with our troops. Nothing could have been more agreeable to the wishes of the inhabitants of Chalco, and they accordingly held themselves in readiness to rise up against the enemy at the proper time.

Sandoval composed his rear-guard of five horse, an equal number of crossbow-men, and the greater part of the Tlascallans, who had all their booty with them. As the Mexicans had everywhere sent out scouts and spies to watch our movements, our present march to Chalco was no secret to them. They had therefore collected a strong body of their troops, and fell upon our rear-guard, which was chiefly composed of Tlascallans. It may easily be supposed that our five horse and few crossbow-men could not stand long against these overpowering numbers; two were very soon killed, and the rest wounded. Sandoval had indeed hastened to their assistance with the first alarm, had succeeded in driving back the Mexicans, and killing seven of their men; yet they managed to gain their canoes, and retreat to a place of safety, which was the more easy for them to do, as the whole of the population of this district was subject to the Mexicans.

Sandoval was uncommonly vexed when he found the five horses and their riders covered with wounds, two crossbow-men killed, and the rest all wounded. He severely reproached them for not having defended themselves better, and for the little protection they had proved to our Tlascallan friends. He could easily see, he added, that they had but recently arrived from Spain, and knew very little about fighting.

His first care now was to provide for the safety of the Tlascallans and their baggage, and to despatch the letters Cortes had given him to Vera Cruz. In these letters our general had given the commandant of that town an account of all our conquests, and of his determination to besiege Mexico, and blockade it on all sides; the letter closed by desiring him to observe the utmost vigilance, and with orders to send all those of his men who were sufficiently strong for service to Tlascalla, where they were to remain until the road should be cleared of the enemy.

After Sandoval had despatched his messengers with these letters, and conducted our Tlascallan friends to where they were out of the enemy's reach, he marched back to Chalco, which was not very far distant. On this march he was particularly on his guard, since he was well aware that Mexican troops were lurking about in all directions, and lay concealed in every house. He had indeed not advanced far along a level tract of country, covered with maguey and maise plantations, before he was vigorously attacked. The enemy, on this occasion, carried, besides their usual weapons, long pikes, which were especially intended against the charge of our horse upon their line. Sandoval, however, twice broke through their dense ranks, and, with the Spanish troops and small body of allies we had still left, he drove the enemy completely out of the field. Five Spaniards, six horses, and many of our allies, were wounded. This time the enemy received a severe retribution for the fresh attack they made upon our troops; and, among the eight prisoners which were made, three were Mexicans of distinction.

When the inhabitants of Chalco, which lay at a small distance from the field of battle, found Sandoval was approaching their town, they came out to welcome him, and expressed their great joy at the victory he had gained.

The next day Sandoval informed the inhabitants that he was obliged to leave again for Tezcuco. They told him they were desirous of accompanying him there, to pay their respects to Malinche, and to present to him the two sons of their late cazique, who had died a few days previously of the smallpox. On his death-bed, they said, he expressed a wish to the chiefs of the country that his sons might be introduced to Cortes to be installed by him as caziques of Chalco. The dying man had likewise recommended them to subject themselves to the great monarch of the teules, as it had been prophesied by their forefathers that, at some period or other, there would arrive from the rising of the sun a people with beards, for whom the dominion of these countries was predestined, and there was not the least doubt that that prophecy was fulfilled in our persons.

Sandoval returned to Tezcuco, taking along with him the two princes, several distinguished personages of Chalco and the eight Mexican prisoners. Cortes was highly delighted on seeing him again, and after Sandoval had related all that had taken place, he retired to his own quarters to receive the caziques of Chalco. He paid them every respect, and, according to their request, acknowledged them as vassals of our emperor, and then installed the two sons of the late cazique into their government. After the caziques had fulfilled their commission, they

handed over their presents, which may have been worth about 200 pesos.

With the assistance of Doña Marina and Aguilar, Cortes had perfectly comprehended what these caziques had said. He showed them every possible kindness, and gave the government of Chalco to the elder prince, with several towns which were subject to it, and to the younger the township of Tlalmanalco, Chimaluacan, Ayotzinco, and of other small towns, so that the elder came in for a little more than half of his father's dominions.

After Cortes had instilled many useful things into the hearts of these men and the young caziques, he dismissed them; and they offered, in return, to render us every service that lay in their power, assuring him, at the same time, that they had been peaceably inclined from the beginning, and that they had been prevented sooner taking the oath of allegiance to our emperor from fear of the Mexican garrison. They likewise informed Cortes that, previous to our retreat from Mexico, they had concealed from the Mexicans two Spaniards who had been sent by him to demand of them tribute in maise, and had conveyed them safely during night-time to our friends of Huexotzinco, thereby saving their lives. This we knew to be perfectly true, for we had been duly informed of it by one of those two Spaniards who had escaped to Tlascalla.

Cortes returned these excellent men many hearty thanks for their kind feeling, and invited them to stay a couple of days longer with us, lest they should fall into the hands of the Mexicans, as he intended to despatch one of his officers to Tlascalla to fetch the woodwork of which our brigantines were to be made, they should then be safely conducted to their homes.

After this interview with the caziques, Cortes determined to send the eight Mexicans whom Sandoval had taken prisoners, to Mexico, and commissioned them to make the following disclosures, in his name, to the new monarch Quauhtemoctzin: "He, Cortes, was very anxious to preserve the monarch of Mexico and his great city from destruction, and hoped, therefore, he would send messengers of peace to us, in which case every injury we had received at the hands of the Mexicans would be forgiven them and altogether forgotten, nor should we demand restitution of the things they had taken from us. It was an easy matter to make war, but it always terminated in the destruction of those who first began it. We were by no means ignorant of the vast preparations which were going on for the defence of Mexico; it would all, however, prove useless, and the only consequences would be

the destruction of his metropolis, and of all its inhabitants. He should bear in mind the amazing power of our Lord God, who lent us his aid on all occasions, and remember also that all the surrounding townships had declared in our favour. For the rest, there was nothing the Tlascallans so greatly desired as a war with the Mexicans, to revenge the death of their fellow-countrymen. We hoped, therefore, he would send messengers to sue for peace, which we would conclude with him on the most honorable terms."

With this message, to which Doña Marina and Aguilar joined some good counsel, the eight prisoners repaired to Mexico. Quauhtemoctzin, however, would not even deign an answer to our proposals of peace, but continued his warlike preparations for the defence of his metropolis, and sent orders to all his troops in the provinces to hold themselves in readiness to march out at a moment's notice, and that every Spaniard who was captured should be brought alive to Mexico, there to be sacrificed to his gods. In order to gain the good wishes of his people, he exempted many from paying tribute, and made a vast many promises.

About this time, the Quauhtitlans again arrived in our quarters, whom, as we saw above, the Mexicans had ill-used for having formed an alliance with us. The dispute, they said, respecting the maise plantations, which had been formerly cultivated for the use of the priests of Mexico, was renewed by the Mexicans, who each week returned to fall upon the reapers, many of whom they had carried off prisoners to Mexico. Cortes, therefore, determined to put an end to these depredations, and marched thither in person at the head of a hundred foot, twenty horse, twelve crossbow-men and musketeers. In order to make sure of success, spies were posted at proper places, who were to bring immediate notice of the enemy's approach. Thus prepared, we espied early one Wednesday morning a strong body of Mexicans advancing towards us; and when they had come near enough, we sallied out upon them, and drove them back to their canoes; four of them were killed, and three taken prisoners.

After this skirmish, Cortes returned to Tezcuco, and the enemy ever after left those townships in peace. I must now relate what happened to Sandoval on his march to Tlascalla, whither he had been despatched to fetch the materials for building our brigantines.

CHAPTER CXL.

How Sandoval marches to Tlascalla in order to fetch the woodwork for building the brigantines, and what happened to him in a place which we termed the Moorish town.

HAVING so long impatiently awaited the completion of the brigantines, and ardently longed to commence the siege of Mexico, Cortes ordered Sandoval, with two hundred foot, twenty horse, and twenty musketeers and crossbow-men, besides a strong body of Tlascallans, and twenty of the most distinguished persons of Tezcuco, to march to Tlascalla, in order to fetch the woodwork for constructing the brigantines. He was also to take along with him the aged persons and young children of Chalco, as they would be in greater security there. Cortes had previously brought about a friendly alliance between the Chalcans and Tlascallans; for as the Chalcans, up to this moment, had belonged to the confederation of Mexico, they had always joined the Mexicans in their expeditions against Tlascalla, so that a deadly enmity existed between these two states. By his mediation, Cortes now put an end to this ill-feeling, and made friendship between them, which proved greatly to the advantage of both.

Sandoval, on this occasion, was also ordered to repair to another township which lay close to the road leading to Tlascalla, in order to chastise the inhabitants there. This township was subject to Tezcuco, and was commonly termed by us the Moorish town.[6] Here, on our retreat from Mexico, about forty of Narvaez's men and several of Cortes' old soldiers, with numbers of Tlascallans, had been put to death, and the latter plundered of three loads of gold. These people were now to be severely punished for their conduct, although the principal guilt lay with Tezcuco, which, at that time, was closely allied with the Mexicans, and had had the chief hand in that affair.

After Sandoval had safely conducted the Chalcans into Tlascalla, he marched on to the Moorish town, where, however, the inhabitants had been duly apprized of our approach, and were all fled to the mountains. Sandoval, however, pursued them, and killed three or four of the inhabitants, and took four of the principal personages, and numbers of women and children, prisoners. These people he treated very kindly, and inquired of them how they had managed to defeat so many Spaniards in a body? They replied, that great numbers of Mexicans and Tezcucans had fallen upon them while passing through a very narrow

defile in the mountains, where the Spaniards could only march one abreast; some had been killed, and the rest were taken prisoners. These were conveyed to Tezcuco, where they were divided between the Mexicans and Tezcucans. They themselves had certainly joined in that attack, but they had merely followed the commands of their superiors. All this the Tezcucans had done, they said, to revenge the death of Cacamatzin their king, whom Cortes had taken prisoner, but who perished on the night of our disastrous retreat from Mexico.

The blood of our unfortunate countrymen was even then sticking to the walls of the temple in this township. Here were likewise found on an altar the entire skins of the faces of two Spaniards, with the beards still hanging to them. The skins had been dressed in the same way as the leather we use for making gloves. In the same manner they had prepared the skins of four horses. Great care had been taken of the hair and horseshoes, which were suspended in the chief temple as tokens of victory. Further were discovered numerous articles of Spanish dress which had been brought as an offering to the idols; on one of the walls of a house were found written in charcoal the following words: "Here the unfortunate Juan Yuste, with several of his comrades, was imprisoned by the enemy." This Juan Yuste was a cavalier who had served under Narvaez, and was one of the most distinguished personages among his troops.

Sandoval and his men were sorely grieved at the sight of all this, but what could they do better than show mercy in return? The whole of the inhabitants had fled away, and those women they had captured were sobbing for their husbands and fathers. Sandoval, therefore, set the four distinguished prisoners with all the women at liberty, and despatched them to bring back the inhabitants who had fled to the mountains. These soon made their appearance, begged forgiveness for the past, and declared themselves vassals of our emperor, with the promise henceforth to be faithful to us and in every way to oppose the Mexicans. In answer to the queries respecting the gold of which they had plundered the Tlascallans, they replied, that the Mexicans and chiefs of Tezcuco had taken it away with them under the pretence that Motecusuma had robbed the temples of it to present it to Malinche.

Sandoval now marched into Tlascalla, and arrived safely in the metropolis of that country, where the caziques had their residence. He found everything in the best order possible, the whole of the woodwork was quite finished and ready to be removed; for which 8000 Indians were taken into our service, who transported the whole of the wood and other materials on their shoulders. These were accompanied

by an equal number of warriors, besides an additional 2000 porters to convey our provisions.[6]

Chichimeclatecl, who, the reader will remember was equally brave as he was high in rank, took the chief command over the Tlascallans in person; under him commanded two distinguished personages, named Teucepil[7] and Teutical, besides other caziques. Martin Lopez, however, with the assistance of other Spaniards, whose names I have forgotten, more immediately superintended the transport itself. Sandoval had feared he should be obliged to wait a few days in Tlascalla until the building materials could be removed, but was highly delighted to find all went on so expeditiously. His march towards Tezcuco was attended with the same ease, so that after the space of two days all had arrived on the Mexican territory. Here matters began to wear a different aspect, and his troops were assailed by the enemy with hideous yells from out the fields and mountain recesses where they were out of the reach of the cavalry and musketeers. Martin Lopez, therefore, deemed it necessary that greater military precaution should be adopted on their march, particularly as the Tlascallans expressed their fears of being suddenly attacked by large bodies of Mexicans. Sandoval, therefore, distributed the cavalry, crossbow-men and musketeers, in such a manner that a portion were always in advance of the transport, and the remainder he placed along the flanks. Chichimeclatecl, who was commander-in-chief of the Tlascallans, was ordered to bring up the rear, where Sandoval likewise took his station. This chief was excessively hurt at this arrangement of the troops, and considered from the post which had been assigned him, that Sandoval put little trust in his bravery; but as the latter himself followed in the rear, and he was informed that the Mexicans generally attacked the rear first where the baggage was, he became satisfied, embraced Sandoval, and thanked him for the honour he had thus conferred upon him.

After another two days' march the transport arrived in front of Tezcuco, and Sandoval made his entry with great magnificence. The Tlascallans had expressly put on their finest mantles, had decorated their heads with the most beautiful feathers, and marched into the town in the best military order, while the drums and pipes were playing. Several hours elapsed before the whole had entered the town, and yet none of our Tlascallan friends moved out of the ranks, while they continually kept crying out: *Long live the emperor, our master! Spain for ever! Tlascalla for ever!* Cortes and his officers came out to meet them, and gave Chichimeclatecl and all of them the most hearty welcome.

The woodwork was carried to the neighbourhood of the canals and harbours, where the brigantines were to be completed. Martin Lopez, who had the chief conduct of these operations, now again set diligently to work. His principal assistants were Andreas Nuñez, the elder Ramirez, a certain Diego Hernandez, with several other carpenters, and two smiths. The work went on so expeditiously that the brigantines were finished in a very short time, and had now merely to be caulked, provided with masts, sails, and then to be rigged. We were obliged, however, to keep a sharp look out, lest the Mexicans should destroy the brigantines, which lay on the staples so very near to the lake; indeed they had three several times attempted to set fire to them, on which occasions we took fifteen of their numbers prisoners, who gave us a very minute account of all that was passing in the city of Mexico, and of Quauhtemoctzin's designs. He was determined, they said, not to make peace with us under any consideration whatsoever; the Mexicans had resolved either to perish in battle or to destroy us all. One despatch after the other was sent to the townships subject to Mexico, commanding the inhabitants to make vigorous preparations for war, and tribute was no longer to be demanded. Night and day were the Mexicans toiling to deepen and widen the canals which intersected the causeways, which were then strengthened by fortifications and palisades. To defend themselves against our horses they had constructed long pikes, to the end of which they had fastened our own swords they had taken on the night of our retreat from Mexico. They had furnished themselves with quantities of round stones for their slings, and large broadswords, with abundance of other weapons.

We were no less assiduous in our warlike preparations, and the canals which had been dug for the launch of our brigantines were now of sufficient width and depth to swim vessels of considerable burden;[8] which, however, is not surprising, as 8000 Indians were daily occupied at this work.

CHAPTER CXLI.

How Cortes marches against the town of Xaltocan, which lay in the midst of the lake, about twenty-four miles from Mexico, and from thence proceeds to other townships.

The materials for building the brigantines were transported to Tezcuco by about 15,000 Tlascallans, who in a few days grew weary of

doing nothing; added to which, our provisions were beginning to fail; and as the Tlascallan general was excessively ambitious, and very courageous, he told Cortes he was desirous of rendering our emperor some signal service, and by measuring his strength with the Mexicans, give us some proof of his loyalty, and convince us of his courage; and at the same time to revenge the death of so many of his countrymen. Our general had merely to inform him at what point he should attack the enemy.

Cortes returned him many thanks for his kind offers, and informed him that he intended to march out himself on the following day with a body of troops. His attack would be directed against the town of Xaltocan, which lay twenty miles from Tezcuco, in the midst of the lake, and was connected with the mainland by a causeway. He had already thrice admonished the inhabitants of that town to sue for peace, and but very recently made them offers of peace through their neighbours of Tezcuco and Otumpan. However, they not only refused to send us messengers of peace, but treated our ambassadors with contempt, and even laid violent hands on them, and then sent them back with this answer to Cortes: "Only come, you will not find us unprepared; come whenever you like, you will always meet with the same reception, and death will be your portion! This was the answer they were desired to give, by command of their gods."

Cortes considered this expedition against the Xaltocans of no small importance, and was therefore determined to command in person. The troops he took with him consisted of two hundred and fifty Spanish foot, thirty horse, with a good number of musketeers and crossbow-men; accompanied by the whole of our Tlascallan friends, and a company of the best warriors of Tezcuco. Of our own officers Cortes selected Alvarado and Oli; Sandoval remaining behind for the protection of Tezcuco, and of our brigantines. We were indeed obliged to be particularly on our guard, for Mexico lay close at hand, nor could we altogether place confidence in the Tezcucans, as the Mexicans had so many friends and relations among them. Before his departure Cortes left especial orders with Sandoval and Lopez to expedite the building of the brigantines, and only allowed them fifteen days more to finish and launch them. He then, after having attended mass, set out on his march. In the neighbourhood of Xaltocan he came up with a large body of Mexicans, who had taken up a strong position, from which they imagined to make a successful attack upon the Spaniards and their horses. Cortes here placed himself at the head of the cavalry, and, after our musketeers and crossbow-men had fired in among the enemy,

he charged their line full gallop, and killed several of them. The Mexicans then retreated to the mountains, where they were pursued by the Tlascallans, who slew above thirty more of their numbers. The first night Cortes encamped in a small hamlet, ordered frequent patrols, posted sentinels in all quarters, and observed every military precaution, as there were many considerable townships in this district. Here we learnt that Quauhtemoctzin had despatched large bodies of troops to the assistance of Xaltocan, which were stationed in canoes on the lake.

Very early next morning we were attacked by the joint forces of the Mexicans and Xaltocans. They kept pouring forth showers of arrows and stones upon us from the small islands which rose among the marshes, by which ten Spaniards and numbers of Tlascallans were wounded. Here our cavalry was completely useless, as they could not pass through the water, which lay between them and the enemy; for they had previously cut through the causeway which led to Xaltocan, and thereby inundated the country. Our musketeers and crossbow-men certainly kept up a brisk fire upon the Mexicans, but here again they had found means to shield their bodies, by raising up boards alongside of their canoes.

Thus all our endeavours proved fruitless, while the enemy kept continually mocking and jeering at us; in derision calling our men old women, and Malinche himself a man of no courage, but whose whole art lay in deceit and flattery. Cortes must certainly have returned without accomplishing anything, if two Indians of Tepetezcuco—which was at great enmity with Xaltocan, had not pointed out to one of his men a spot which had been flooded three days previously, but was shallow enough for them to wade through into the town.

On receiving this information Cortes ordered the crossbow-men, musketeers, with our other troops, and several of the Tlascallans, to step boldly into the water, which reached up to their middles, and push forward, while he himself took up his position on the main land, with the cavalry to cover their rear, should the Mexicans feel inclined to attack them from behind.

The enemy now fell furiously on those advancing through the water, and wounded several of them; but our men were not to be daunted by this, and kept moving forward steadily until they had reached the dry part of the causeway. The road to the town was now open to them, and they made terrible havoc among the enemy's ranks, and richly repaid them for the abusive language they had thrown out. The Mexicans, with the inhabitants, now took refuge in their canoes, and fled to Mexico. Our men made a considerable booty, in cotton, gold, and other matters, then set fire to some houses, and returned to the

mainland, where Cortes was stationed; for they feared to take up their night's quarters in the town, as it was entirely surrounded by water.

In this engagement our troops captured several fine young females, who had not been able to escape from the town. The Tlascallans likewise made a rich booty, and loaded themselves with cotton stuffs, salt, gold, and other matters.

The night following Cortes encamped in a hamlet about four miles from Xaltocan, where our men dressed their wounds; but one Spaniard, who had been shot in the throat by an arrow, died soon after. Sentinels were posted as before, and frequent patrols made during the night, for the country was very thickly populated.

The next day Cortes marched to another extensive township, called Colvatitlan, but was everywhere met with yells and jeers from the Mexicans and the inhabitants. Our men were obliged to bear all this patiently, as our cavalry could not act here, and it was totally impossible to get at the Mexicans, who had posted themselves on the different small islands. Cortes, however, marched into Colvatitlan without opposition, and found the town quite deserted by the inhabitants. Here he took up his quarters for the night, and adopted every military precaution.

The day following he marched to another large township, called Tenayucan, which, on our first march to Mexico, we had termed the town of Serpents, because we found in a large temple there two horrible-looking idols, shaped like serpents. This town was likewise deserted by its inhabitants, who had all fled to Escapuzalco, which lay four miles further on. This was the same Escapuzalco where the great Motecusuma had all his gold and silver articles manufactured; we therefore called it the *town of Silversmiths.* About two miles from this place lay Tlacupa, the same where we passed the latter part of the night of sorrows, and the enemy killed several more of our men. Before our troops reached this town they fell in with a numerous body of the enemy, formed of the inhabitants of the towns they had passed through, joined by those of Tlacupa and Mexico, which lay in the immediate neighbourhood. They attacked our troops with such impetuosity, and with their ranks so firmly closed, that it was with the utmost difficulty Cortes was able to break their line with the cavalry, and then even our foot had much hard fighting with sword in hand before they could compel the enemy to retreat. Cortes quartered his men for the night in Escapuzalco, and next morning continued his march. If, however, he had been attacked the previous day by large bodies of the enemy, their numbers were greatly increased on this, and they observed more method

in their manœuvres, and wounded several of our men. They were, however, compelled to fall back into their fortifications, and the Spaniards forced their way into the town, where they plundered and set fire to a great number of houses.

When the news of the unfortunate termination of the battle reached Mexico, additional troops were immediately ordered to Tlacupa to oppose Cortes, and received instructions first to attack the Spaniards, and then to fall back upon Mexico, in order to entice the Spaniards to pursue them along the causeway. This stratagem succeeded admirably, for Cortes was deceived by their apparent flight, and pursued the enemy as far as a bridge, thinking the victory was already his. When the Mexicans considered they had caught the Spaniards sufficiently deep in the foil, they turned suddenly round, and fell upon them with such terrific numbers, by land, from their canoes, and from the house-tops, that Cortes almost gave himself up for lost. In his hurried flight over the bridge he was attacked by so vast a body, that all opposition was fruitless. One of our ensigns, determined not to relinquish his hold of the colours, was dangerously wounded in the struggle, and at last tumbled headlong with them into the water, but was fortunate enough to escape drowning, and, by dint of great bravery, succeeded to rescue himself and his flag, just when the Mexicans laid hold of him, and were about to drag him out of the water into a canoe.

In this unfortunate engagement we had five men killed and many wounded, and it was with the greatest difficulty our men could fight their way through the dense body of the enemy, and regain the main land.

After this battle Cortes stayed five more days in Tlacupa, during which time he had another engagement with the Mexicans and their allies; after which he began his march back to Tezcuco by the same road he had come. The Mexicans, who construed this movement into a flight, and imagined that Cortes had lost all courage, thought this was the moment to gain great honour to themselves, by giving the Spaniards a signal defeat. For this purpose they lay in wait for them in a spot where they could get easily at our horse; but met with so rough a reception from our troops, that a considerable number of them were slain. Cortes lost one man and two horses; but had so far cooled the enemy's lust for battle, that they no longer harassed him on his march, and in a few days he reached the township of Aculman, about eight miles and a half from Tezcuco, to which it was subject. When we were informed of his arrival there, Sandoval, with all of us, accompanied by nearly the whole of the caziques and troops of Tezcuco, went out to

meet him. The joy at seeing each other again was very great, for we had been without any tidings of Cortes or his troops for fifteen days.

After the first welcomes had passed, and some arrangements made with respect to our troops, we returned that same day to Tezcuco, as we durst not leave that town unprotected at night. Cortes encamped for the night at Aculman, and did not arrive at Tezcuco until the day following.

As the Tlascallans had made a considerable booty in this expedition, they requested leave of our general to return to their country, which he readily granted; and they took their route through a part of the country where the Mexicans had omitted to station any troops; so that they arrived safely in Tlascalla with all their spoils.

After the lapse of four days, during which time our general and his men had rested from their fatigues, the chiefs of several townships in the northern districts of the country arrived in Tezcuco, with a present of gold and cotton stuffs, and desired to be admitted as vassals of our emperor. These townships were Tucapan, Maxcaltzinco, Naultzan, and many others of less note.

When the chiefs of these townships were brought into Cortes' presence they paid him the profoundest veneration, and handed over the presents to him; then informed him that they were desirous of being on terms of friendship with us, and of becoming subjects of the king of Spain. They likewise said, that these townships had assisted the Spaniards in the battle of Almeria, where the Mexican commander Quauhpopoca, on whom we had taken so direful a revenge, had put several teules to death.

Cortes, who had always thought to the contrary, was highly delighted on hearing this; he showed these ambassadors every kindness, and graciously accepted of their present. No inquiries were made as to what the conduct of these townships had latterly been; but Cortes, without any hesitation, acknowledged them vassals of our emperor, and then dismissed them with flattering assurances of his friendship.

About this time messengers also arrived from other townships which were in alliance with us, to beg our general's assistance against the Mexicans, who had fallen hostilely into their country with a large body of troops, and had carried off numbers of them prisoners, and scalped many others. Similar bad tidings were likewise received from Chalco and Tlalmanalco, the inhabitants of which towns stated that their destruction was inevitable if they did not receive immediate assistance, as the enemy was rapidly advancing against them in great numbers. They, however, did not merely give a verbal description of the danger they

were in, but likewise brought forth a large piece of nequen cloth, on which they had depicted the different squadrons of the enemy's troops which were marching against them.

Cortes was greatly perplexed to know what he should do, and scarcely knew what answer to give, nor how he should be able to send assistance to both places at once; many of our men were wounded, and almost worn out with fatigue; four had died of their wounds, and eight others of pleurisy, and of bleeding profusely from the nose and mouth, occasioned by the weight of our arms, which we durst never lay aside, and by the forced marches and the quantity of dust which got down our throats.

Our general, however, informed the ambassadors of the first-mentioned townships that he would soon repair to their assistance; but desired them in the meantime to apply to their neighbours for help, and with their united forces to oppose the advancing foe. It was their timidity, he said, which inspired the Mexicans with courage; for the latter had not so many troops at their command as formerly, from the vast increase of their opponents on all sides.

By these representations Cortes succeeded in allaying their fears and arousing their courage, but they requested some authority from him in writing to show to their neighbours, in which he should command them to repair to their assistance.

To explain their motive for desiring this, I must remark, that though the Indians at that time could neither read nor understand our writing, yet they looked upon any written document as signifying a more particular and peremptory command. They were therefore highly delighted when Cortes gave them the required letter, and they showed it to their friends, who then instantly marched out their troops to join them, and with their united forces they now boldly advanced against the Mexicans, and fought with pretty good success in the battle which followed.

We must now return to Chalco, respecting the safety of which Cortes was particularly solicitous; for it was of the greatest importance to him that this province should be kept clear of the enemy. Our line of communication with Vera Cruz and Tlascalla ran through this country, and from which we also obtained the greater part of our provisions, as the soil was uncommonly productive of maize. Sandoval, therefore, was ordered to march thither very early next morning with 200 foot, twenty horse, twelve crossbow-men, and ten musketeers, besides all the Tlascallan troops which still remained with us,—though these had greatly decreased in numbers; for, as I have above men-

tioned, most of them had departed to their homes with the booty they had made. A company of Tezcucans was therefore added to this detachment, and placed under the immediate command of Luis Marin, an officer with whom Sandoval lived on the most intimate terms of friendship. We others remained behind for the protection of Tezcuco and our brigantines, nor did Alvarado or Oli leave our head-quarters on this occasion.

Before accompanying Sandoval to Chalco, I must make a few comments on some observations which fell from several cavaliers, who, on comparing my account of Cortes' expedition to Xaltocan with that of Gomara, discovered that I had omitted three things mentioned in his history. One circumstance was, that Cortes had appeared before Mexico with the thirteen brigantines, and fought a terrible battle with Quauhtemoctzin's whole armed force, which had been distributed in the canoes and large pirogues. The other, that Cortes, when he had advanced up to Mexico along the causeway had held a parley with the Mexican chiefs, and threatened to reduce the town by famine: and the third, that he had not acquainted the inhabitants of Tezcuco with his intention of marching against Xaltocan, from fear they might betray his designs to the Mexicans.

The answer I made those gentlemen on these three points was, that at the time of our expedition against the Xaltocans, our brigantines were not completed, and that it must appear ridiculous in itself, for the brigantines to have found their way overland thither, and that our cavalry and other troops should have taken their road through the lake. But as we have above seen, when Cortes had advanced along the causeway from Tlacupa, it was with great difficulty he made his retreat good, nor had we at that time besieged the town so closely as to be able to cut off all its supplies of provisions; on the contrary, Mexico was then still in possession of the districts whence it obtained those supplies. Everything which Gomara relates as having taken place on that occasion did not happen till some time after. It is equally untrue when this historian states that Cortes took a roundabout way in order to conceal his design upon Xaltocan from the Tezcucans on his march thither; he had no choice of roads, as there was only one, which led through the territory of Tezcuco.

These are indeed shocking blunders; but I am well aware that they must not be laid entirely to the door of Gomara, but for the most part to the false information which had been furnished him, and this expressly to bestow all the renown of our deeds of arms on Cortes, and thereby throw the heroic valour of his soldiers into the shade. What

I relate is the pure truth, and these same cavaliers were subsequently convinced that my statements were correct. Having thus digressed for a short time I must return to Sandoval, who, after he had attended mass marched out with his troops from Tezcuco and arrived in front of Chalco by break of day.

CHAPTER CXLII.

How the captain Sandoval marches to Chalco and Tlalmanalco, and what he did there.

SANDOVAL set out with his troops on the 12th of March, 1521. The first night he encamped at Chalco, and arrived the next morning early before Tlalmanalco, where the caziques and inhabitants gave him a most hearty welcome, and provided abundance of food for his troops; but the caziques informed him he had still to march further on to the large township of Huaxtepec, where a large body of Mexican troops was stationed, who would be joined by all the warriors of the province.

Sandoval, on receiving this information, concluded that there was no time to be lost, and immediately marched towards Chimalhuacan, which was subject to Chalco, where he quartered his troops for the night. The inhabitants of Chalco had sent out spies in every direction, and learnt that the enemy was not far off, but lay in wait for the Spaniards in the thickets and hollows of the mountains. Sandoval, who was an officer of great determination and foresight, ordered his march as follows: the musketeers and crossbow-men went in advance, the cavalry were to follow three and three together, and when the former had discharged their pieces, the horse were to charge the enemy's line at full gallop, and to direct the point of their lances at the face, and continue the attack until the enemy was put to flight. The infantry were to keep their ranks firmly closed, and not to rush in upon the enemy until a signal for that purpose was given. This order of attack Sandoval deemed necessary, as the enemy's numbers were very great, and the nature of the ground unfavorable for his manœuvres; besides that, it was impossible to discover whether the Mexicans had not dug pits or laid other snares to entrap the Spaniards; so that it was quite necessary his small army should keep close together in a body.

After Sandoval had marched a little further on he came up with the

Mexicans, who were advancing towards him in three distinct bodies, with fearful yells and the horrible din of drums and shell trumpets, and instantly fell upon our troops like so many furious lions. As soon as Sandoval observed that the enemy intended to fall upon him in three distinct bodies, he likewise changed his order of attack, and commanded the cavalry to charge the foe without delay, and not wait for the rest of the troops. He then placed himself at their head, encouraged his men and rushed forward to the attack, under the cry of—"Santiago!" The powerful shock which the enemy thus sustained certainly caused some of them to recoil, but they immediately closed again and boldly advanced against our horse, being greatly assisted by the unevenness of the ground and a deep break, where it was difficult for our horse to manœuvre. Sandoval, perceiving the enemy's advantage, ordered his foot to close their ranks again, placed the crossbow-men and musketeers in front, and those who were armed with swords and shields on the flanks. In this order they were again to advance to the attack as soon as they heard a shot from the other side of the break, which would be a signal to them that the cavalry had charged and driven the foe back on to the level ground. Our allies were likewise ordered to follow the example of the Spanish foot; this was accordingly done and the object accomplished.

In this attack the enemy had observed better order in their mode of fighting, and our troops had many wounded. They certainly retreated, but only to make a stand at another and more favorable position. Sandoval, with the horse, followed close at their heels, but merely took three or four prisoners, and lost Gonzalo Dominiguez, whose horse unfortunately stumbled and fell with its whole weight upon him, and he expired a few days after of the consequences.

I particularly mention the loss of Dominiguez, because he was one of the most courageous men of our troops, and one of the best cavalry officers; and considered equally brave in battle as Oli and Sandoval. Every one of us deeply lamented the death of this excellent officer. Sandoval now pursued the enemy with the whole of his troops up to the town of Huaxtepec, where his further progress was arrested by an army of above 15,000 Mexicans, who completely hemmed him in on all sides. Numbers of his men were wounded and five horses killed; but as the ground was level here, he succeeded by a desperate charge of his cavalry to break the enemy's line, and drove them back into the town. Here the Mexicans were again about to make a stand behind some entrenchments which they had thrown up; but the Spaniards and their allies allowed them no time to rally, and our horse was so

close at their heels, that at last they shut themselves up in a strong part of the town where it was impossible to get at them.

Sandoval concluded the enemy would remain quiet for the remainder of the day: he therefore allowed his men to take a little rest, ordered the wounded to be attended to, and provisions to be distributed, of which a considerable booty had been made. Just as his men were in the midst of their repast, two of the cavalry and other of the outposts came up in all haste, crying out, "To arms! to arms! to arms! the Mexicans are advancing in great numbers!" But as it was always the custom of our men to have their weapons ready at hand, they instantly arranged themselves in order of battle, and marched to a large open space, where the conflict was renewed. Here again the Mexicans courageously maintained their position for a short time behind some entrenchments which had been thrown up, and wounded several of our men; but Sandoval attacked them so vigorously with his cavalry, the musketeers, crossbow-men, and remaining foot, that the enemy was completely beat out of the town, and offered no further resistance that day.

Sandoval being now sure that he had gained a complete victory, offered up thanks to the Almighty, and recreated himself in a garden of extraordinary beauty, belonging to this township, in which there were many spacious buildings, and altogether so many remarkable objects to be seen, as were nowhere else to be found in New Spain. The whole of the grounds were indeed laid out in a style worthy of a great monarch, and it required some considerable time to visit all parts of it, as it was above a mile long.

I was not present myself in this expedition, and did not see this garden until twenty days after, when I accompanied Cortes on his excursion through the different large townships which surround the lake. I had been laid up with a severe wound in the throat, which I received from a lance, in the battle of Iztapalapan, and had nearly cost me my life. The scar is still visible.

But the reader will have already discovered, from my mode of describing, that I was not present in this expedition; as I have never used the expression—we did this, we marched thither; but always put—so and so was done, our troops marched to this place, and to that place, and so on. Nevertheless, everything took place exactly as I have related; for at head-quarters the minutiæ of every engagement soon become known, and one cannot add to or suppress any facts.

When Sandoval on the following day found that the enemy had entirely quitted the neighbourhood, he despatched five of the inhabitants, whom he had taken prisoners in the late battles, two of whom

were chiefs, to the caziques of this township, desiring them to send him messengers of peace, and assured them a free pardon for all the past. They, however, sent word that they durst not comply with this summons, from fear of the Mexicans. Offers of a similar nature, which Sandoval made to another large township, met with no better success. This latter place was called Acapalista,[9] and lay about eight miles from Huaxtepec. It was in vain that Sandoval desired them to consider the difference between war and peace, and to ask themselves what benefit their neighbours of Huaxtepec had derived from all the Mexican troops they had harboured. He desired them to drive away the Mexican garrison, or he would himself march against them, and treat them as enemies. Their reply to this was as follows: "He might come when he liked: they had made up their minds to make a sumptuous repast off their bodies, and to offer up savoury sacrifices to their gods."

The caziques of Chalco, who were with Sandoval being aware that there was a much stronger body of Mexicans lying in Acapalista than had yet appeared in the field of battle, and that they merely awaited a favorable opportunity to renew the attack upon their town, urgently requested him to march thither, and drive the enemy out of that town. Sandoval at first refused to comply with their request, considering that he himself, with many of his troops, and most of the horses, were wounded, and that he did not wish to advance farther than Cortes had ordered him; besides which, several cavaliers of Narvaez's troops urged him to return to Tezcuco, and represented to him that Acapalista was a town of great strength, where they might easily meet with a total overthrow. But the captain Luis Marin strongly advised Sandoval to the contrary, and thought he was not justified in returning before the work was half finished, as the enemy would certainly renew the attack upon Chalco, and thereby defeat the object of the expedition altogether. By these arguments Sandoval was convinced of the necessity of marching against this town, which lay only eight miles farther on, and he set out for that place.

When he had arrived in the neighbourhood of the town, a large body of Mexicans came advancing towards him, and attacked him so vigorously with their lances, slings, and arrows, that three horses and several of his men were instantly wounded, nor was Sandoval able to get at the enemy, who immediately retreated to the rocks and the fortified heights above, making a terrific noise with their drums, shell trumpets, and hideous yells.

Sandoval now despatched a few horse in advance, to see whether the Mexicans, in case he should attack the town itself, could march to its

assistance, and halted, with the rest of his troops, in the plain. As the caziques of Chalco and the other Indian allies showed no desire to come to an engagement with the enemy, Sandoval determined to put them to the proof, and cried out to them: "Well, why do you stand looking idly on there? Why don't you advance to the attack? Are we not come here to protect you?" But they replied, they durst not attack this strong place, and considered that the teules had come to do the hardest part of the work for them.

Sandoval was soon convinced that there was not much dependence to be placed in these Indians, and he therefore stormed the fortified heights with the whole of his Spanish troops. Although numbers of his men were wounded, and he himself severely so on the head, he continued to push forward, and forced his way into the town, where considerable havoc was made among the enemy's ranks, which was increased by the Chalcans and Tlascallans, who now joined in the conflict with great intrepidity. Our troops, indeed, gladly left the last part of the work to them, as soon as the enemy was put to flight, for they felt compassion for the inhabitants, and satisfied themselves by capturing some few pretty females and other objects of value. The Spaniards even checked our allies in their horrid cruelties, and rescued many a man and woman from their grasp who otherwise would have been sacrificed to the idols.

The Mexicans had fled to some steep rocks beyond the town; and, as numbers of them were wounded, they washed off the blood from their bodies in a small brook, so that the very water was tinctured by it, though for no longer a space of time than would take to repeat an Ave Maria. Yet Gomara relates that the water was so completely mixed with blood that our men would not quench their thirst at it.[10] But it was not necessary for them to go to this brook for that purpose, as in the town itself there were numbers of wells full of the purest water. After this engagement, Sandoval marched back to Tezcuco, taking with him great numbers of prisoners, among whom were many beautiful Indian females.

When Quauhtemoctzin received intelligence of this defeat of his troops, he was excessively grieved; and the more so as the people of Chalco were his subjects, and had now, for the third time, taken up arms against him. He was, however, determined to be revenged; and while Sandoval was marching back to Tezcuco, he assembled an army of upwards of 20,000 men, and despatched these in 2000 canoes to Chalco. Here they arrived so suddenly, that Sandoval had scarcely entered Tezcuco, and had but just seen Cortes, when messengers arrived

in canoes from Chalco to solicit his immediate return. Cortes, who was speaking with Sandoval when this message arrived, was so enraged that he would not hear his report to the end; accused him of having neglected his duty, and commanded him to return immediately to Chalco with those of his men who were not wounded. Sandoval's feelings were greatly hurt at Cortes' reproaches; but what grieved him more than all was, that he would not even listen to him. He, however, instantly returned to Chalco, which he and his men reached excessively fatigued by the weight of their arms and the great distance they had marched. The Chalcans, in the meantime, had begged assistance from their neighbours the Huexotzincans and Tlascallans on the first information they received that the Mexicans intended to invade their territory again; and these two powers had made such haste that they arrived that very night, with an army of above 20,000 men. This inspired the Chalcans with fresh courage; they attacked the Mexicans in the open field, fought with uncommon bravery, and of the enemy's chief officers alone they killed and captured as many as fifteen, without mentioning the numbers they made prisoners. This defeat was most humbling to the Mexicans, and they were much more ashamed of it than if they had suffered it from us.

When Sandoval arrived in Chalco, he found the enemy was already vanquished; and, as there was no fear of the Mexicans returning, he marched back to Tezcuco, taking the prisoners along with him, and now Cortes appeared highly delighted. Sandoval, however, had not forgotten the harsh treatment he had so recently suffered from him, and peremptorily refused, in his anger, to call upon him, although Cortes had sent an invitation to him, and assured him that he had now been informed of the true state of the case, and was convinced that no blame could be attached to him. They subsequently became reconciled, and Cortes strove, by every means in his power, to regain Sandoval's friendship.

CHAPTER CXLIII.

How we marked our slaves at Tezcuco with a red-hot iron, and received intelligence that a vessel had run into Vera Cruz.

As Sandoval had brought a great many slaves with him, and there were besides numbers we had taken on previous occasions, Cortes resolved they should be marked with a red-hot iron. It was, there-

fore, announced that each person was to bring his slaves to a certain house for that purpose. Our men accordingly came with their slaves, and imagined they would merely have to pay the fifth of their value to the emperor, and that then they would be entirely their own without any further deduction.

If, however, Cortes and others had acted meanly towards us in Tepeaca, the meanness they now displayed was still greater. First, the emperor's fifths were deducted; then a second fifth was set apart for Cortes, and other portions for our officers; and, during the night preceding the last division, all the finest females had disappeared. Cortes had faithfully promised the men that all the slaves should be sold by public auction, but this was not done, for the officers of the crown acted in this matter just as they pleased. This was a good hint for us in future; so that afterwards, when we had captured any beautiful Indian females, we concealed them, and gave out that they had escaped, as soon as it came to marking day; or if any one of us stood in favor with Cortes, he got them secretly marked during the night-time, and paid a fifth of their value to him. In a short time we possessed great numbers of such slaves; and if we were questioned about them, we merely said they were Naborias[11] of the neighbouring tribes near Tlascalla, who had come to sue for peace. I must also observe that two months had scarcely elapsed before some of our female slaves knew of every soldier in the troop whether he behaved well to his Naborias or not; whenever, therefore, these females were put up to auction, and they found they had been bought by a man who bore a bad name in this way, they disappeared, and were nowhere to be found. If they did not recapture them it was all the same; they were still debited to the buyer in the royal accounts. Our soldiers fared no better in the division of gold; for if any of them went to demand their share, so many items were balanced against them that they really considered themselves fortunate if they had not to pay something into the bargain.

About this time a vessel arrived in Vera Cruz, from Spain, with the following passengers: Julian de Alderete, a native of Tordesillas, who had been appointed royal treasurer; further, the elder Orduña, from the same place, who lived for some time in Puebla. After the conquest of Mexico he brought over five or six daughters from Spain, all of whom he married well. A Dominican friar, named Pedro Melgarejo de Urrea, from Seville, who brought with him a papal bull,[12] by which we obtained absolution for all the sins we may have been guilty of during these wars. By means of this bull, Urrea amassed a large fortune in the space of a few months, with which he returned to Spain, whither

he was accompanied by Geronimo Lopez, as a commissary of his holiness. This same Lopez subsequently became the royal secretary in Mexico.

Among the numerous other passengers, I can still remember the following names: Antonio de Caravajal, who commanded one of our brigantines, and is still living at Mexico, far advanced in years; Geronimo Ruiz de la Mota, of Burgos, who likewise commanded a brigantine, and, after the conquest of Mexico, married a daughter of Orduña. There was also a certain Briones, of Salamanca, who was hung four years ago for exciting a revolt among the troops in the province of Guatimala; and, lastly, there was Alonso Diaz de la Reguera, who lived for some time in Guatimala, and is now residing at Valladolid.

This vessel had likewise a large store of arms, powder, and other matters on board;[13] wherefore her arrival was hailed by us all. If I remember rightly, we also heard on this occasion that the bishop of Burgos stood no longer at the head of affairs, and that he had altogether fallen into his majesty's disgrace ever since his majesty had been convinced, by the reports of our agents, of the great and wonderful services we had rendered the crown, and which the bishop above mentioned, in his official reports, to favour Diego Velasquez, had placed in the opposite light.

In the meantime our brigantines were fast approaching towards completion, and we were all awaiting the moment with impatience when we should be able to lay close siege to Mexico. We had just begun our preparations when messengers arrived from Chalco with the information that the Mexicans were again marching against that town, and they therefore begged we would come immediately to their assistance. Cortes promised them he would himself march with his troops to their relief, and not rest until he had completely driven the enemy from their territory. He therefore immediately issued orders that three hundred foot, thirty horse, the greater part of our musketeers and crossbow-men, with the troops of Tezcuco and Tlascalla, should hold themselves in readiness to march out. Of our principal officers, Alvarado, Tapia, and Oli accompanied him on this occasion. The royal treasurer Julian de Alderete, and father Pedro Melgarejo, both of whom had just arrived from Spain, also joined him. I myself accompanied Cortes in this expedition, at his own particular desire.

CHAPTER CXLIV.

How Cortes made a hostile excursion to all the cities and larger townships which lay round about the lake, and what happened on that occasion.

CORTES now marched out with a considerable body of troops to fulfil the promise he had made to the inhabitants of Chalco, in order at once to put an end to the attacks which the Mexicans almost weekly made upon this town. Sandoval was left behind with a strong detachment of foot and horse for the protection of Tezcuco and our brigantines.

We set out on our march very early on the morning of the 5th of April, 1521, after we had attended mass, and took up our quarters the first night in Tlalmanalco, where we were kindly entertained by the inhabitants. The next day we reached Chalco, which lies in the immediate vicinity of the former place; and Cortes instantly sent for all the caziques of the province, whom he then addressed at some length by means of our interpreters, informing them that his present expedition was directed against the townships which lay on the borders of the lake, in order to force them into obedience, and also to explore the territory, and form his plans for blockading the city of Mexico. Our thirteen brigantines, he told them, would shortly be launched, and he requested them to assemble all their warriors by the next day, that they might join our troops in this expedition. Upon which the caziques one and all declared their willingness to comply with his desires.

The following morning we continued our march, and arrived as far as the township of Chimalhuacan, which was subject to Chalco. Here we were joined by upwards of 20,000 of our allies, who had assembled from Chalco, Tezcuco, Huexotzinco, Tlascalla, and other townships. This was a larger body of Indians than had ever, up to this time, joined our troops in New Spain. All these warriors had been induced to join us in the hopes of making a rich booty; but the expectation of plentiful repasts off human flesh, which never failed after an engagement, was no less an incitement; and I cannot better compare these many thousands of Indians than to the large flocks of vultures, ravens, and other birds of prey which, in the Italian wars, follow the armies, to satiate themselves on the dead bodies which have fallen in battle.

This ferocious appetite of our Indian allies was but too soon to be glutted; for we received information that large bodies of Mexican troops, with their allies from the surrounding neighbourhood, stood ready prepared to attack us in an adjoining valley. At this intelligence,

Cortes issued orders that we should equip ourselves for battle early the following morning. We accordingly left Chimahuacan next day very early, after we had attended mass.

Our march lay through some steep rocks, and we soon arrived between two small mountains whose tops had been fortified. Hither a vast number of Indians, with their wives, had fled, who yelled excessively, and threw out all manner of abusive language towards us. We, however, took no notice of them, but marched on quietly to an extensive township called Yauhtepec, which was quite deserted by its inhabitants. We made no stay in this place, but marched on until we arrived in a plain where there were several small wells, but little water. On one side of the plain was a high rocky mountain, with a fortification which was most difficult of approach. When we had arrived in the vicinity of this rock, we found that it was crowded with Indians, who jeered at us and greeted us with a shower of arrows, lances, and stones, by which three of our men were wounded. Here Cortes ordered us to halt, and said, "It appears that the Mexicans have everywhere taken up some stronghold, and mock at us, because they imagine we cannot get at them." He then despatched a few of the horse and crossbow-men to reconnoitre a part of the rock, in order to discover some more favorable point to attack the enemy. They, however, returned with the answer that the rock was only accessible at the spot where we had halted, and that, on all other sides, it rose up perpendicularly. Cortes then commanded us to ascend and storm the enemy's fortresses. The first ensign Christobal del Corral and the other ensigns were to lead the way, and all the remaining foot to follow them. Cortes, with the cavalry, stationed himself in the plain beneath, to cover our rear, and protect the baggage against other bodies of Mexicans. As soon as we commenced this laborious ascent, the Indians began rolling down large stones and huge lumps of rock upon us, and it was terrible to behold how these heavy masses rebounded as they thundered down the rugged steeps. It was a miracle that we were not all crushed to pieces; and certainly Cortes had, in this instance, not acted as a prudent general when he ordered this perilous attack. At my very feet a soldier named Martinez, a native of Valencia, and who had been butler to a gentleman of distinction in Castile, was completely smashed by a piece of rock, and died without a single groan or sigh. Two other soldiers, one of whom was named Gaspar Sanchez, a nephew of the treasurer of Cuba, and the other, Bravo, met with a similar death from the rolling masses of stone. We, nevertheless, continued the ascent with great intrepidity: but scarcely a few moments had elapsed before another brave soldier,

named Alonso Rodriguez, with two of his companions, were crushed to death, and most of us were struck on the head by the pieces of stone which were split off the rock by the tumbling masses.

At that time I was still an active young fellow, so that I kept up close with the ensign Corral, and we reached some hollows in the rock, along which we continued to advance for some time, but at the imminent risk of our lives, until Corral could proceed no further, and held himself fast by one of the thick trees with prickly thorns which grew in these hollows; his head was wounded all over, his face covered with blood, and his colours torn into rags. Here he turned round to me, and said, "Alas! Señor Bernal Diaz, it is impossible to advance further this way; for even if the tumbling masses of rock do not crush us, we shall scarcely be able to hold fast by our hands under these projecting masses." As we were thus clinging to the rock by our hands, I espied Pedro Barba, who commanded the crossbow-men, with two soldiers, likewise clambering up to this projection, and I cried out to him, "Captain, don't give yourself any further trouble; there is neither place here to put your hand or foot, unless you wish to roll headlong down the mountain." To this he answered, in the fulness of his courage, or because he thought he was bound to speak as an officer in high command, "Here we have to do with deeds, not words." I was obliged to swallow this reproach, and replied, "Well, we shall see how well you will manage to get up here!" The words were scarcely out of my mouth when other large pieces of the rock came rolling down from the heights above, by which Pedro Barba was wounded, and one of his men crushed to death. This seemed to deter Barba, and he would not move a step further up.

The ensign Corral now called out to the soldiers to apprize Cortes that it was impossible to ascend further, and that the descent was equally dangerous. This information was conveyed from one man to the other until it reached Cortes, who had even lost three men in the plain below, and several others were severely wounded, by the lumps of rock which came tumbling down. He had, however, not been able to see the perilous situation we were in, from the winding of the rock, but had fully expected to find that the greater part of us were either killed or dreadfully wounded. He now immediately signified, by loud cries and a few musket shots, that we should descend. This we accordingly did with the utmost precaution, each one striving to assist his neighbour down the steep rocks, until we all safely arrived in the plain beneath; our heads were covered with wounds and blood, and the colours of our ensigns were torn to rags. When Cortes saw the terrible

condition we were in, and was informed that we had lost eight men, he offered up thanks to the Almighty that the rest of us had escaped so well.

Among other things that came to be spoken about were the few words which passed between Pedro Barba and myself; indeed the latter mentioned it himself; and the ensign Corral gave such a description of the terrible masses of rock which came rolling down, that every one was astonished at our escape, and the account of the great dangers we had had to brave was noised about through the whole of our camp.

In the meantime a large body of Mexicans were lying in wait for us in a spot where we could neither see nor imagine them to be. They had been stationed there in case the other troops on the rock just mentioned should require assistance; but when they were informed that our attempts to storm this fortified rock had failed, both these bodies determined to fall upon us from various points at once.

When Cortes received notice of their approach, he ordered the horse and the whole of our troops to march against them. The ground we occupied was quite level, and fertile meadows stretched along between the hills. The enemy now retreated before us, and we pursued them until they took up a strong position on another rock, without our being able to do them much harm, as they continually fled to places where we could not possibly get at them.

We therefore returned to our former position, in front of the first rock we had attempted to ascend; but as not a single drop of water had passed our lips the whole day, and as our horses were equally parched with thirst, and the few wells here contained nothing but muddy water, for the best were in the enemy's possession, we broke up our encampment, and formed another, about six miles further on, at the foot of a mountain, as before; but here also we found but little water.

Near this rocky mountain there stood several black mulberry trees and about ten or twelve houses, and we had scarcely rested a few minutes when the wild war-whoop of the Indians resounded from the mountain top, and we were immediately greeted with a shower of arrows and lances, while large masses of the rock came rolling down, as before. Here the enemy were in greater numbers than on the former occasion, and their position much stronger, as we soon discovered. All the firing of our musketeers and crossbow-men was to no purpose, for the enemy was beyond their reach, and too well protected by their entrenchments. An attempt to ascend the rock was attended with no better success; twice had we essayed this from the houses just mentioned, and some few of us had reached a good way up; but we found it even more ter-

rific than the former rock; so that we did not exactly gain much honour in this affair, and were forced to cede the victory to the Mexicans and their allies.

We encamped for the night beneath the mulberry trees, but were almost dying with thirst. The following morning our crossbow-men, and musketeers were ordered to take up their position on a very steep rock, which lay near to us, and to direct their fire at the enemy in their entrenchments on the rock opposite.

Francisco Verdugo and Julian de Alderete, who were excellent crossbow-men, joined this small detachment, which was placed under the command of Pedro Barba. While these were on their way thither, the rest of our troops once more attempted the ascent of the mountain from the above-mentioned houses; but the enemy continually rolled down numbers of large and small stones, that a great number of our men were soon wounded; and even if we had not met with this opposition, our toil would have been fruitless, for the rock was so steep that we could scarcely move or hold fast by our hands. While we were thus fatiguing ourselves to no purpose, the detachment of musketeers and crossbow-men had arrived at their place of destination, but they were only able to kill and wound a very few of the enemy.

The combat had lasted in this way for above half an hour, when matters took a sudden change, and peace was concluded with the enemy, through the interposition of a merciful Providence. This sudden change was owing to the circumstance of a number of women, children, and poor people, who had been carried to a level space on the top of the rock for safety, having no water to quench their burning thirst. In order that we, who were beneath, might know what they desired, the women waved their cloaks, and made signs with their hands, to indicate they were willing to bake bread for us; while the Indian troops discontinued to throw their lances, arrows, and stones, upon us.

When Cortes learnt what they desired, he ordered all hostilities to be stayed, and gave the Indians to understand by signs that they should send down to us five of their most distinguished men, to conclude peace with us. It was not long before these made their appearance, and with profound respect begged forgiveness for the past, and assured our general that it was fear for us only which had induced them to take up this strong position on the mountain. Cortes answered them rather harshly, that they had all deserved death, for having commenced hostilities with us; but as they now came of their own accord to sue for peace, he would substitute mercy for justice; but told them they must go to the opposite rock, and call the chiefs of the other troops, that

they might likewise come and sue for peace; and inform them, that if they refused we would continue to surround them until they died of thirst, as we were well aware that they could get no water, there being very little to be had in any part of this neighbourhood.

While these personages were on their way to the other rock, Cortes entered into conversation with father Melgarejo, and the royal treasurer, Alderete, and described to them the battles we had fought previous to their arrival in New Spain; the great power of the Mexicans, and the large cities we had seen up to the present moment in this country; when they assured our general, that if the bishop of Burgos had informed the emperor as faithfully of the truth as he was studious of falsehood in his account, the emperor would certainly by this time have nobly rewarded him and his troops. No monarch, they said, had ever been rendered the vast services he had received at our hands, who had thus, without his knowledge, subjected so many large cities to him.

After this discourse, Cortes ordered the ensign Corral and myself, and two of our officers, Xaramillo and Pedro de Ircio, to ascend the rock, in order to inspect the enemy's fortifications there, and whether our musketeers and crossbow-men had killed or wounded many of the Indians; and altogether to see what kind of people they were. "But I must desire you not even to take as much as a grain of maize from them," added Cortes; and I understood him to say, "Mind you look to your own advantage."

We then began to ascend by a very dangerous path, and we found the enemy's position here even more formidable than the first one, for the rocks were perpendicular. There was only one entrance to the fortification itself, which was not broader than double the width of the mouth of a baker's oven. At the summit of this rock we found a spacious greensward, on which were encamped great numbers of Indian warriors, women, and children. All the loss they had sustained was twenty killed and several wounded. There was not a drop of water for all this crowd of human beings to drink. A considerable number of bundles of cotton stuffs and other matters were lying about, destined as tribute for Quauhtemoctzin. When I saw all these matters, and knew they were going to be sent as tribute to Mexico, I ordered four Tlascallans who were with me, and four Indians who had charge of these goods, to take each a load and follow me. Just at that moment Pedro Ircio came up, and ordered that everything should be left where it was. I first remonstrated with him for this, but was forced in the end to obey his commands, because he was an officer. "Did you not yourself," said he, "hear Cortes say that we were not even to touch a grain of maize belonging to these

people. I will certainly inform against you if you do not leave these things where they are." I acquiesced of course, but I told him I was of opinion that these things were not comprehended in Cortes' commands. However, I returned without taking a single thing with me.

When we had again arrived in the plain below, and given Cortes an account of what we had seen, Pedro de Ircio thought our general would be pleased to hear how he had restrained me from carrying off the packages of cotton stuffs; but Cortes said to him angrily, "Why did you not allow Bernal Diaz to take those things away? Really I am astonished that you did not yourself stay with those people above! Is it thus that you understood me, when I told you to look to your own advantage? Bernal Diaz, who understood my meaning, was thus forced to return the things which he had taken from those dogs! who now laugh in their sleeves at having killed and wounded so many of our men!"

Upon this, Ircio offered to ascend the rock again, and to fetch the packages; but Cortes said to him sharply, "There is no time for that now."

In the meantime the caziques from the other rock had arrived in our camp; and after giving many reasons why Cortes should pardon them, he granted them their request, and declared them vassals of our emperor.

As water was so very scarce in the whole of this district, we marched back to the town of Huaxtepec, where those extensive gardens where, which I have mentioned above: and I must declare, that during the whole course of my life I never beheld such a splendid spot! I therefore drew the attention of Cortes to them, and he instantly repaired thither with Alderete, the royal treasurer. They both walked about in the garden for a length of time, and acknowledged they had never seen any thing so beautiful in Spain.[14] The whole of us encamped for the night in this garden, and the caziques of the township came to offer their services to Cortes; for Sandoval, on his visit here, had concluded peace with them. The following morning we marched towards Cuernavaca, and came up with a strong body of Mexicans who had been drawn out of this town to oppose us; but our cavalry charged them with great impetuosity, put them to flight, and pursued them for about three miles, up to another large township, called Teputztlan. Here the Mexicans were so very careless, that our troops fell upon them before their spies could give notice of our approach, and we made a considerable booty, besides taking many fine female prisoners; but the Mexicans and the other inhabitants fled precipitately from the town.

Cortes sent three or four several times to the caziques of this dis-

trict, desiring them to come and sue for peace, otherwise we should burn down their town and put them all to death. However, they each time sent word that they had no wish to come, and we set fire to half the houses of the town, in order to frighten the other towns of this district into obedience. It was not till then that the caziques of Yauhtepec, through which we had passed this day, made their appearance, and declared themselves vassals of our emperor.

The next day we marched to Coadalbaca, which we often erroneously termed Cuernavaca.[15] In this town lay a strong garrison of Mexicans, besides the troops of the place itself, and it was rendered difficult of access from a hollow eight fathoms deep, which lay in front of the town, and through which a small stream of water flowed. There was no other way for our cavalry to get into the town than by two bridges, but these had been burnt down by the enemy, who were strongly entrenched on the other side of this deep hollow, and incessantly annoyed us with their arrows, lances, and slings. While they were thus attacking us Cortes received information that a couple of miles further up there was a spot where our cavalry could pass over. Our general, therefore, immediately repaired thither with the horse, while the rest of us strove to get over in the best way we could. We succeeded above our expectations, by climbing up and along the branches of the trees which grew on each side of this hollow, but this was attended by considerable danger, and three of our men fell down into the water, one of whom broke his leg. My head grew quite dizzy as I thus passed across the depth; but as soon as twenty or thirty of us, with a great number of Tlascallans had reached the opposite side, we fell upon the rear of the Mexicans before they were in the least aware of it; for they had considered it an impossibility for us to pass the hollow, and imagined in their astonishment, when they saw us approaching, that we were much more numerous than was really the case, particularly as Oli, Alvarado and Tapia, with the greater part of our cavalry who had risked their lives by crossing a bridge which had been almost burnt down, appeared there at the same time. We now fell in a body upon the enemy, who instantly turned round and fled to the mountains, and other parts of this deep hollow, where we could not possibly follow them. A short time afterwards Cortes arrived with the remaining cavalry, and we now took possession of the town without any further opposition. Here we took many fine Indian females prisoners, and otherwise made a rich booty, particularly of large sized mantles. Our general now allowed us to rest for the remainder of the day, and we all quartered ourselves comfortably in a garden belonging to the chief of the town.

We had not been long here before our outposts brought intelligence that twenty Indians were approaching, who, to judge from their bearing, must either be caziques or men of distinction, and seemed to be coming with some message or to sue for peace. They proved, indeed, to be the caziques of the town, who approached Cortes with the utmost veneration, handed over to him a present in gold, and begged pardon for their recent behaviour towards us. In excuse for not having come earlier to demand peace of us, they said that Quauhtemoctzin had secretly commanded them to treat us as enemies, and that they had not been able to avoid this as their town formed one of the fortifications of the country, and was occupied by a Mexican garrison. They were now, continued they, convinced, that there was no fortification we could not take, and it was therefore their sincere wish to become friendly with us.

Cortes was very kind to these caziques, and spoke to them of our emperor, and of his mercy to all those who willingly obeyed him; and it was in his name he now acknowledged them as his subjects. I still remember the extraordinary expression these caziques made use of on this occasion; namely, that our gods in punishment for their not having sued earlier for peace, had given their gods authority to chastise their persons and deprive them of their property.[16]

CHAPTER CXLV.

The terrible thirst we suffered on our further march; our dangerous position at Xochimilco, and the many battles we fought there with the Mexicans, until our return to Tezcuco.

From Cuernavaca we marched towards Xochimilco, a large town lying about eleven miles from Mexico,[17] and of which the greater part was built in the water. On our march we adopted our usual military precautions, and arrived at a forest of pine trees, without being able to obtain a single drop of water all the way. Our arms were very heavy, and the day, which had been exceedingly hot, was now far spent, and we were almost parched with thirst, yet we had still several miles to go, nor did we know for certain whether we should find the wells, which, it was said, lay further on.

By this time the whole of our troops were almost exhausted with fatigue, and our Tlascallan friends lost all courage after one of their countrymen and an old Spaniard died of thirst. Cortes, observing the great distress we were in, ordered us to halt under the shade of the

pine trees, and despatched six of our horse in advance, along the road leading to Xochimilco, in search of some town or village where it was said we should find the wells, as our general proposed to encamp near them for the night.

This small body of cavalry, among which were Oli, Valdenebro, Truxillo, and other brave men, had scarcely left, when I slipt away without being observed by Cortes and the others, taking with me three of my Tlascallan naborias, who were active young fellows, and I followed the three above-mentioned cavalry officers until I was observed, and they halted to wait my coming up. They advised me to return immediately, that I might not fall into the hands of the Mexicans. I was not, however, to be deterred by this; and Oli, with whom I stood on a very friendly footing, at length gave me permission to accompany them, but to hold my hands ready for battle and my legs for flight. I would at that moment have risked my life to obtain a drink of water, so painful was my thirst.

We may have advanced about a couple of miles in a straight line when we came up to a number of country houses which lay scattered among the hills, and were subject to Xochimilco. Our officers entered these dwellings without delay, in search of water, which they found, to their inexpressible joy. One of my Tlascallans, who had followed them, instantly returned to me with a large earthen jug full of water, with which I and my servants quenched our thirst. I now again returned to the wood where Cortes had halted with our troops, and it was high time I did, as the inhabitants were beginning to assemble, and they followed us with hootings and yells. I had ordered the jug to be replenished with water, and gave it to one of my Tlascallans to carry. On my return, I met Cortes, who had again put his troops in motion. I informed him that we had found water in a small village not far off, and that I had brought him a jug full. My Tlascallans had taken the precaution to cover up the jug carefully, that no one might take it from them, for thirst knows no law. Cortes and the other officers by whom he was surrounded were highly delighted, and drank their fill; we then continued our march, and reached the small village before sunset. There was still some water left in the houses, but not sufficient for the whole of our troops, so that several of the men, in order at least to moisten their mouths, chewed a kind of thistle, the sharp prickles of which wounded their tongues and lips. The small detachment of horse now also returned, and informed our general that they had found the wells where we were to encamp for the night, but these were still a good way off, and the whole neighbourhood was beating to arms.

We encamped near the wells for the night, ordered the pickets and outposts as usual, and otherwise took every precaution. I myself formed one of the night watch, and, if I still remember rightly, it blew a strong gale of wind, and some rain was falling.

The next morning very early we marched towards Xochimilco, and arrived in front of that town about eight in the morning. Here an immense body of the enemy stood ready to oppose us, part of whom were stationed in the open fields, and the rest in front of a bridge which had been destroyed, and near which large entrenchments had been thrown up. At the end of their pikes they had fastened the swords we had lost on our unfortunate retreat from Mexico, and many of the chiefs were armed with our own broadswords, which had been beautifully polished. The whole of the Mexicans appeared to be well armed, and the entire plain was filled with warriors.

The conflict for the possession of the bridges lasted about half an hour, yet, with all our firing and hard fighting, we were not able to force them. Our situation became truly perilous, for large bodies now fell upon our rear, so that the only choice we had left was to cross the water at all hazards. In this we fortunately succeeded, partly swimming, and partly wading through. Several of our men, while thus crossing over, drank so much water that their stomachs swelled out to an enormous size. In crossing this water, we lost two men, and had several wounded; nevertheless, we succeeded, by dint of our swords, to drive the enemy before us along a causeway which led to the main land. Cortes, who was advancing with the cavalry from another quarter, fell in with a body of more than 10,000 Mexicans, who were coming to the assistance of the town. The Mexicans, on this occasion, received the charge of the cavalry with fixed lances, and wounded four of our horses. Cortes himself had got into the midst of the enemy, and rode a dark brown horse, which we commonly termed the *flatnose*. Whether this animal, which was otherwise an excellent horse, had become too fat, or was over-fatigued, I cannot say; but, to be short, it fell down with its rider, and numbers of Mexicans instantly laid hold of our general, tore him away from the saddle, and were already carrying him off. When some of the Tlascallans and the brave Christobal de Olea saw this, they immediately flew to his assistance, and, by dint of heavy blows and good thrusts, they cut their way through to our general, and assisted him into his saddle again. Cortes fortunately escaped with only a wound on the head, but Olea had received three very severe wounds.[17] Those of us who stood nearest now also hastened to the assistance of Cortes; for, as every street was crowded with

the enemy, we were obliged to attack them in separate bodies and from different points, so that, for some time, we had totally lost sight of him; but we concluded, from the terrific yells of the Mexicans, that there must be a severe struggle between them and the cavalry. We therefore cut our way through the enemy, at the risk of our lives, to the spot where Cortes, surrounded by only ten of the cavalry, was bravely repelling the desperate attacks of the enemy. The Mexicans had taken up a position behind a deep canal, which had been strengthened by a palisade; they thus had the advantage ground: but we soon put them to flight.

As Olea, who had saved our general's life, was severely wounded, and had lost much blood, and the streets were still crowded by the enemy, we advised Cortes to march back to some entrenchments, under cover of which his own and Olea's wounds could be dressed. This retrograde movement was not accomplished without considerable difficulty and danger; for the Mexicans now imagined we were going to retreat altogether, and fell upon us with redoubled fury.

In the midst of this second conflict, Alvarado Tapia and Oli, with the main body of the cavalry, made their appearance, who had been attacking the enemy at other points. The blood was trickling down Oli's face, nor had any one of them escaped without a wound. They said they had been attacked by terrific bodies of the enemy, in the open fields, and had not been able to drive them back. The reason of their having been separated from the rest of the cavalry was, because Cortes, after he had passed across the water, ordered the horse to divide into two bodies, and attack the enemy at different points.

While we were busily engaged dressing the wounds of our men, all at once there arose from out of the streets and adjoining fields terrific yells, with the wild war music of the enemy; the courtyard in which we had stationed ourselves was suddenly filled with Mexicans, and, in a very few moments, many more of our men were wounded. But the enemy drew very little advantage from this bold enterprise; for we set upon them so vigorously in return, that great numbers of them soon lay stretched on the ground. Our cavalry also galloped in among them, and slew a great many more. On our side, we had only one man killed and two horses wounded.

We drove the enemy completely out of the open square, and took possession of another more spacious, in which stood several large temples, where we could rest ourselves in greater safety. Several of our men mounted to the top of these temples, from whence they could see the great city of Mexico and the extensive lake which it commanded; but

at the same time they espied more than 2000 canoes, all filled with warriors, making straightway to us as fast as their paddles could bring them.

These troops were commanded by Quauhtemoctzin to attack us immediately, and to leave us no peace night or day. He had likewise despatched another 10,000 men by land, to fall upon us from another quarter: and another 10,000 men stood ready to march hither to relieve the first, that not a single man of us might escape alive from Xochimilco. All this we learnt the day following from the five Mexican chiefs whom we took prisoners. But the Lord Jesus had disposed otherwise for us.

As soon as intelligence was received of the approach of this vast fleet of canoes, we were doubly vigilant, and strong detachments were placed at all the places and canals where we thought the enemy would disembark. Our horses stood ready saddled, and every officer, including Cortes himself, made the rounds during the whole of the night, and kept a sharp look-out on the causeway and towards the main land. I myself was posted with ten men near a stone wall. We were furnished with stones, crossbows, muskets, and long lances, and were to prevent the enemy from landing in this quarter. Similar small detachments were stationed at the other canals.

I and my comrades thus keeping a sharp look-out, we heard all at once the noise of several canoes, which were advancing directly towards us; but we gave the enemy so rough a reception with our slings and lances, that they durst not venture to land; and while one of our men had hastened to inform Cortes of what was going forward in this quarter, a second and still more numerous squadron of canoes arrived, and attacked us most vigorously with lances, stones, and arrows, wounding two of our men; but we defended ourselves with no less vigour: and, as it was an uncommon dark night, these canoes again joined the great body of the fleet, which had repaired to some other small harbour or deeper canal, where the whole of them disembarked. These troops, who, it seemed, were not very willing to fight at night-time, joined those which Quauhtemoctzin had sent by land, and both together formed an army of above 15,000 men.

I must here mention a circumstance, which, however, I hope the reader will not construe into vanity on my part.

When one of the men belonging to my small detachment brought Cortes intelligence that a number of Mexican canoes had approached the spot where we were stationed, he, with ten of the cavalry, was just coming towards us. As they approached us with the utmost silence, I and Gonzalo Sanchez cried out to them, "Who goes there? How?

can't you open your mouths?" and then slung three or four stones at them. But Cortes, who immediately recognized us by our voices, remarked to Aldercte, father Melgarejo, and our quarter-master Christobal de Oli, who accompanied him, "I am in no fear with regard to this quarter; for here are posted two men who came with me when I first arrived in this country, and to whom I would intrust a more important command than this!" He then came up and spoke to us himself, and observed that our position was one of great danger, and that, in case of need, we were instantly to send for assistance. Our general had scarcely left us when we heard him driving a soldier back to his post, which he had deserted. It was one of those who came with Narvaez.

There is likewise another circumstance which I must not forget to mention. In the battle of the previous day, our musketeers had spent all their powder, and the crossbow-men their arrows; Cortes, therefore, during the night-time, ordered us to collect all the arrows we could find, and to furnish them with fresh feathers and points, of which we had always a good stock by us. With this work our crossbow-men were occupied the whole of the night, and Pedro Barba, captain of that company, never left them for a moment; Cortes himself looking in from time to time to see how they were getting on.

When daylight appeared, our camp was assailed by the whole of the Mexican troops from different points at once; but as we were never unprepared for an attack, our cavalry rushed out towards the land side, and we others, with the Tlascallans, towards the lake, and fell so vigorously on the Mexicans that we soon killed three of their chiefs, and numbers of their troops died of their wounds the day following. The Tlascallans behaved with uncommon bravery, and took five Mexican chiefs whom they brought in prisoners, from whom we learnt the exact number of troops which Quauhtemoctzin had ordered against us.

On our side we had only one killed, but a great number of wounded.

This battle, however, had not yet terminated; for our cavalry, in pursuing the enemy, came up with the 10,000 warriors whom Quauhtemoctzin had despatched to the assistance of the others. Several of the officers who commanded these troops wore our Spanish swords, of which they were not a little vain; and they said it was by our own swords we were to be vanquished.

Our few horse durst not encounter so large a body of the enemy, and therefore drew off to one side, until they should be joined by Cortes with the rest of the troops. When our general was informed of their critical position, he instantly sallied out, with the rest of our cavalry, who had remained in the courtyard on account of their wounds, and

all our foot, with the Tlascallan troops. A most terrible and obstinate conflict now ensued; but at length, by dint of heavy blows and thrusts, we repulsed the enemy, with considerable loss. On this occasion eight distinguished Mexicans fell into our hands, from whom we learnt that Quauhtemoctzin had despatched against us another considerable fleet of canoes, and other large bodies of his troops by land. These troops he had sent off with the perfect assurance that, coming suddenly upon us, they would complete the victory, after we had been fatigued by such constant fighting, and weakened by loss of men and the number of our wounded.

When we heard this we were doubly on our guard, and our general determined to abandon the town on the following morning, and not wait for any further attacks. We therefore made the best use of our time to dress our wounds and repair our weapons.

During this interval, it appears that some prisoners of Xochimilco pointed out to the Tlascallans several houses belonging to rich individuals, in which were hidden many valuable things, such as manufactured cotton interwoven with feathers, women's shifts, gold, and other matters. These houses stood in the lake, but it was possible to reach them by a causeway, and by passing over two or three bridges which lay across the deep canals. The Tlascallans communicated this to several of our men, who instantly repaired to these houses, which they found quite unprotected, and, as they had been told, filled with various articles of value. They stowed away as much as they possibly could, and returned with a rich booty to our head-quarters. When others of our men saw these rich spoils, they likewise paid a visit to these dwellings, and were busily engaged in emptying some wooden cases, which were full of different things, when a large fleet of Mexican canoes arrived with a numerous body of troops, and suddenly fell upon the plunderers, of whom they wounded the greater part, and carried off four alive to Mexico. It was indeed a wonder that the rest escaped. Two of the four Spaniards were Juan de Lara and Alonso Hernandez; the two others belonged to the company which stood under the command of Andreas de Monjaraz, but I have forgotten their names.

These unfortunate men were brought into the presence of Quauhtemoctzin, who questioned them about the smallness of our army, the number of our wounded, and the object of our present expedition: and when he thought he had gained sufficient information, he ordered their arms and legs to be chopped off, and to be sent to those towns which had concluded peace with Cortes, accompanied by the message that he hoped to kill us all before we could escape to Tezcuco, and

with our hearts and our blood he would make a savoury offering to his idols.

Quauhtemoctzin then despatched a large fleet of canoes filled with troops, and a considerable army by land, to Xochimilco, with strict commands not to allow one of us to escape alive out of that town.

Not to fatigue the reader with a description of the many battles we fought with the Mexicans during these four days, I will confine myself by stating that, with break of day, so vast a number of Mexicans rushed all at once upon us from the inlets of the lakes, from the streets, and from the mainland, that it was with the utmost exertions only we were able to cut our way through them to a large square which lay at a short distance from the town, and where the inhabitants usually held their markets. There we halted for a few minutes, with the whole of our baggage, to arrange the order of our march.

Previous to quitting this place, Cortes addressed a few words to us, in which he reminded us of our perilous position, having still to pass by several dangerous points, where the whole armed force of Mexico was lying in wait for us. It would, therefore, be desirable, he said, to leave behind as much of our baggage as we could possibly spare, for it would only encumber our movements in battle.

To this we one and all replied, that we were men who had the power to defend our baggage, ourselves, and his person, if God lent us his protection; and that we considered it but a small sacrifice which he required us to make. When he saw in what an excellent disposition we were, he commended us all to God, and arranged the order of march. The wounded and our baggage were placed in the centre, one half of the cavalry formed the vanguard, and the other half the rearguard; and the crossbow-men and Tlascallans were distributed in a similar manner: for we purposely collected our chief strength around the baggage, as the Mexicans invariably made their first attack upon this. Our musketeers were of no use to us, as all their powder was consumed.

In this way we began to move forward; but as soon as the Mexicans found we were leaving the square, they concluded it was from fear, as was indeed the case; they sallied out upon us, wounded two of our men, and attacked our centre with great intrepidity to make themselves master of our baggage; but they were unable to make any impression on the close order of our ranks.

During the whole of our march to Cojohuacan, which lay about eight miles from Xochimilco, we had continual skirmishes with the Mexicans, who took every favorable opportunity of annoying us with lances, stones and arrows, and then suddenly retreated beyond the canals,

where we could not follow them. In this manner we reached Cojohuacan, at ten o'clock in the morning, and found the town quite deserted by its inhabitants.

I must here observe that there are a number of towns lying round about Mexico, all at about eight miles distance from each other. Of these, Xochimilco, Cojohuacan, Iztapalapan, Chohuilobusco, Quauhnahuac. Mizquic, and three or four other towns, are half-built in the lake itself, and none of these towns lie at a greater distance from each other than from six to eight miles, which accounts for the Mexicans being able to assemble so vast a body of troops against us in Xochimilco.

When we arrived in this deserted town, we dressed our wounds, furnished ourselves with arrows, and rested for the remaining part of the day; and indeed we required some repose, for we knew we should have to fight many more battles before we reached Tezcuco.

The next morning very early we again continued our march, and took the road towards Tlacupa, which lay about eight miles further on. Large bodies of the enemy fell upon us at three different places along our route, but we each time repulsed them, and pursued them to their canoes in the inlets and canals.

On one occasion during this march, Cortes left the main body with ten of the cavalry, among which were four of his grooms, to lay an ambuscade for the Mexicans, who every now and then came suddenly upon us from the inlets of the lake. Cortes attacked and routed a body of Mexicans, who, after a short stand, fled with precipitation, and were pursued by our general; in doing which he fell himself into a more terrible ambush, from which the enemy suddenly burst upon him, and wounded two of his men; and he, with all those who accompanied him, would undoubtedly have been killed or taken prisoners if he had not instantly retreated. The enemy, however, succeeded in capturing two of his grooms, who were brought before Quauhtemoctzin, and afterwards sacrificed to his gods.

The main body of our army had, in the meantime, arrived with flying colours in Tlacupa, while only Cortes, with the ten horse, remained behind, and we began to fear that some misfortune had befallen him; wherefore Alvarado, Oli, and Tapia immediately turned back with a strong body of horse in the direction we had seen him take. They soon came up with the two grooms who had escaped from the enemy, and who related how they had been indebted for their lives to a precipitate retreat; and that Cortes was following behind, as he was obliged to ride at a gentle pace, his horse having been wounded. It was not long before our general came up, to the great joy of all; but

he appeared excessively grieved at the loss of his two grooms, almost to shedding tears.

Just as Cortes entered Tlacupa, it began to rain very fast; for which reason we rested here for a couple of hours in a large square of the town. Our general, with several other officers, the treasurer Alderete, (who fell ill here,) father Melgarejo, and several soldiers, including myself, ascended to the top of the great temple of this town, from which we beheld the neighbouring city of Mexico, with the numerous other towns which stood in the lake. When father Melgarejo and Alderete beheld all this splendour at once, they could scarcely find words to express their astonishment; but when they contemplated the great city of Mexico more minutely, and saw the numerous canoes hurrying up and down this immense lake laden with merchandize or provisions for the city, or occupied in fishing, they were actually terrified, and exclaimed to each other that our arrival in New Spain could not be by the power of man alone, and that it was through the great mercy of Providence that our lives were still preserved. They had once before remarked, said they, that no monarch had ever been rendered such signal services by his subjects as we had rendered to our emperor; but now they were more convinced than ever, and would duly inform his majesty of what they had seen.

Father Melgarejo then consoled our general for the loss of his two grooms, which so greatly afflicted him. While we soldiers were thus gazing upon the city of Mexico, we again by degrees recognized those spots which had become so memorable to us, and we pointed out to each other the great temple of Huitzilopochtli, the Tlatelulco, and the causeways, with the bridges over which we made our disastrous retreat. At this moment Cortes sighed more deeply than he had previously done for the loss of his two grooms, whom the enemy had carried off alive. And it was from this day our men began to sing the romance, which commences—

"En Tacuba esta Cortes
Con su esquadron esforsado,
Triste estava y mui penoso
Triste y con gran cuidado,
La una mano en la mexilla
Y la otra en el costado," etc.

As our general was thus standing in deep contemplation, the bachelor Alonso Perez, who was appointed fiscal after the conquest of New Spain, and lived in Mexico, stepped up to him and said, "General, you

should not thus give way to grief; it is ever so during war time, and men will certainly never have occasion to sing of you as they did of Nero,—

'Mira Nero de Tarpeya[18]
A Roma como se ardia,
Gritos dan niños y viejos,
Y el de nada se dolia.'"

To which Cortes replied, "How often have I not offered peace to that city! But it is not that circumstance alone which causes my grief; I am likewise thinking of the dreadful scenes we have to go through before we can subdue this place; though, with the assistance of God, we shall accomplish this also."

I must now, however, quit these discourses and romances; indeed the time was ill suited for such things. Our officers now deliberated whether or not we should march a short distance along the causeway, which lay near to Tlacupa; but as we had no powder left, and only a few arrows, besides that most of our men were wounded, and as a similar attempt which Cortes had made a month earlier on this same causeway had ended so disastrously, it was resolved we should continue our march, lest the Mexicans should fall upon us this very day, or during the night. From the near vicinity of the metropolis it was easy for Quauhtemoctzin to send a body of troops against us at any moment. We therefore broke up our quarters here, and marched straight forward to Ezcapuzalco, which we found entirely deserted by its inhabitants. From this place we came to Tenayucan, or the town of Serpents, as we called it; (the reader will remember what I related in a former chapter respecting the origin of this name.) The inhabitants of this place had likewise fled. We next came to Quauhtitlan, and the rain came down in torrents during the whole of the day, so that we could scarcely drag one foot after the other, from the weight of our arms and of our clothes, which were completely drenched with water.

It was perfectly dark when we entered this township, which was also deserted by its inhabitants. The rain came down in torrents during the whole night, which created a great deal of mire and dirt. The inhabitants and Mexicans, who had fled to places where we could not get at them, kept hooting at us from the evening until next morning, without intermission. Owing to the extreme darkness of the night, and the heavy rain which was falling, we neither posted sentinels nor made any rounds; there was nothing but disorder to be seen in our camp, and no one remained at his post. I can speak from experience, for

the first watch had been assigned to me; but no officer came to make the rounds, or see that all was right.

The next day we marched to a large township, whose name I have forgotten. The streets were covered with mud, and not an inhabitant was to be seen. On the following morning we arrived at Aculman, which is subject to Tezcuco; and the inhabitants of this place being apprized of our approach, came out to meet us. They were accompanied by several Spaniards, who had arrived from Spain during our absence. Besides these, Sandoval, with the troops under his command, and Don Fernando, king of Tezcuco, had likewise come out to welcome us. Every one was overjoyed at our return, but particularly the inhabitants of the surrounding neighbourhood, who brought us quantities of provisions.

Sandoval returned this same day to Tezcuco, fearing the enemy might make an attack on this town in the night time. The following morning Cortes also left, for this place, where we arrived quite fatigued, and covered with wounds; besides that, we had to mourn the loss of many of our brave companions in arms, whom the Mexicans had carried off alive, and sacrificed to their idols. I must now inform the reader what a perilous posture affairs had assumed at Tezcuco.

CHAPTER CXLVI.

How we discover, on our return to Tezcuco, that a conspiracy had been set on foot by the men of Narvaez's troops to murder Cortes, and all who were of his party; of the author of this conspiracy, his punishment; and of other matters.

DURING our absence a conspiracy had been set on foot by a most intimate friend of the governor of Cuba, named Antonio de Villafaña, a native either of Zamoro or Toro, in conjunction with others of Narvaez's troops, whose names, for honour's sake, I will refrain from mentioning here. The object of this conspiracy was to murder Cortes on his return, which was to be done in the following manner.

The conspirators designed handing over a letter to Cortes while he sat at dinner with his officers and other soldiers, which was to be securely fastened and sealed, purporting to come from his father, with a vessel that had just arrived from Spain. While he was occupied in the perusal of this letter, he and the whole of the officers and soldiers

who sat at table with him, and offered any resistance, were to be poignarded to death.

All this being settled, it pleased the Almighty that the conspirators should also let two other distinguished officers into the secret, whose names, however, I must likewise repress. Both these officers had accompanied us on our recent expedition around the lake, and one of these officers, after Cortes should have been killed, was to be appointed one of the new captain-generals. In the same manner the other chief appointments, besides all our property and horses, had already been disposed of by the conspirators. The Almighty, however, in his mercy, prevented this horrible deed from being carried into effect, the consequences of which would have been continual divisions, the inevitable loss of New Spain, and the total destruction of our troops. The whole of this conspiracy was discovered to Cortes by one of our soldiers a couple of days after his return to Tezcuco, and he had thus sufficient time to adopt active measures for suppressing it before it spread further. The honest man who made the discovery to him assured him also that there were several men of rank among the conspirators.

Cortes, after he had handsomely rewarded this man, communicated the whole affair, under the seal of secrecy, to the officers Alvarado, Oli, Lugo, Sandoval, Tapia, and myself; also to the two alcaldes for the year, and to all those in whom he could place confidence. He then ordered us to arm ourselves without any further delay, and he then proceeded with us to the quarters of Antonio de Villafaña.

On entering his apartment we found him in conversation with several of the conspirators, and the four alguacils who accompanied us immediately arrested him. The rest instantly took to flight, but Cortes had many of them seized. Villafaña being thus in our power, Cortes thrust his hand into that officer's bosom, and drew forth a paper, containing the whole plan of the conspirators, to which all their names were attached. Cortes, on perusing this paper, found the names of several men of importance among the list of conspirators; and being desirous of saving them from dishonour, he afterwards gave out that Villafaña had swallowed the paper, and that he had not read it himself, nor even so much as seen it.

A criminal suit was now instituted against Villafaña, when he, with several others who were implicated in it, made a full confession of the whole matter. Cortes, the two alcaldes, and the quarter-master Oli, who formed the court-martial, then pronounced Villafaña guilty, and sentenced him to be hung; and, after he had confessed to father Juan Diaz, he was executed in front of his own quarters.

Here Cortes allowed the matter to rest, though several of the conspirators were kept in close confinement, and in order to frighten them appearances were made as if they likewise would have to share a similar fate with Villafaña. Our general, however, was desirous of saving their names from dishonour; to which may be added, that this was not exactly the time to go to the utmost severity of the law.

From that moment our general had a body guard, consisting of the captain Antonio de Quiñones, a native of Zamora, and twelve trustworthy men, who were to be near his person both night and day. In the same way he likewise requested the rest of us in whom he could place confidence to watch over the safety of his person. He never, however, evinced any animosity in his subsequent behaviour towards the other conspirators, though he took care to be particularly upon his guard against them.[19]

After this miserable affair was ended, notice was given that the prisoners we had made in our expedition round the lake were to be brought in to be marked within the space of two days. In order not to waste many words on the subject, for the third time I will merely state that our men were even more shamefully cheated on this occasion than on the former. First the emperor's fifths were deducted, then those of Cortes, and after him our chief officers committed their piracies. If, therefore, any of us had an Indian female who was handsome or strong of limb, we certainly took her to be marked with the iron, but stole her away the night following, and took care not to show her again until some considerable time had elapsed; so that numbers of our slaves were never marked at all, and yet we employed them as our naborias.

CHAPTER CXLVII.

How Cortes issues orders to the inhabitants of all the townships in the neighbourhood of Tezcuco which were allied with us, to furnish us with arrows and copper points for the same, and what further took place at our head-quarters.

Our brigantines were now so far advanced towards completion, that they had merely to be rigged. For each brigantine a number of spare oars had been made in case of need. The canal in which these vessels were to be launched, and through which they were to be conveyed into the lake, was now also sufficiently deep and wide to swim these vessels.[20] Cortes now, therefore, began to make active preparations for the siege of Mexico. He issued orders to all the townships which

lay in the vicinity of Tezcuco, and were in alliance with us, for each of them to furnish him with 8000 copper points for our arrows, to be made after the model of our Spanish ones, of which some were sent them for that purpose. They were also to furnish an equal number of arrows, which were to be made from a wood particularly adapted for that use, and they received some of our Spanish arrows to work by. He allowed them eight days for the making and delivery of these; and indeed both the arrows and the copper points arrived at Tezcuco in the time specified. Our stock of these now consisted of 50,000 pieces, and the arrow points made by these people were even better than those we brought from Spain.

Cortes then ordered Pedro Barba, who commanded the crossbow-men to divide the arrows and copper points among his men, and see that every man fixed the points neatly to the arrows, and attached the feathers with strong glue. Every crossbow-man was also to furnish himself with two closely twisted cords for his bow; further to provide himself with a number of spare nuts for the bows, that if one should crack or fly off he might have another in readiness. The crossbow-men were also to exercise themselves in shooting at heaps of earth to ascertain the strength of their bows. Care was therefore taken that they should not want for Valencian strings to twist the cords of, for the vessel of Juan Burgos, which had recently arrived from Spain, had fortunately brought a good supply of these as well as of bows, powder, muskets and other arms, besides a quantity of horse-shoes. In the same way our cavalry were ordered to equip themselves, have their horses fresh shod, and to exercise them daily in all manner of cavalry evolutions.

Cortes then sent word to the elder Xicotencatl, his two sons, and to Chichimeclatecl, informing them that we should leave Tezcuco after the feast of Corpus Christi, and begin the siege of Mexico. He therefore requested them to send him 20,000 warriors from their country, from Huexotzinco, and from Cholulla, who were now all in friendly alliance with each other. But it was unnecessary to inform the Tlascallans of our intentions, for they were always duly apprized beforehand by those of their countrymen who accompanied us in our expeditions and returned home with the booty they had made. The inhabitants of Tlalmanalco and Chalco were also requested to hold themselves in readiness to march out at a moment's notice. These and all our other allies were informed of the day when we proposed to commence operations against Mexico. From all sides we received the most friendly assurances of assistance, and that Cortes' orders would be punctually obeyed.

CHAPTER CXLVIII.

How Cortes reviews the whole of his troops at Tezcuco; and of his further dispositions for conducting the siege of Mexico.

After Cortes had thus acquainted our allies with his designs against Mexico, he determined to review the whole of his troops, and selected for this purpose the second day of Easter. This review was held in the large square of Tezcuco, and our muster-roll gave the following numbers: Eighty-four horse; six hundred and fifty foot soldiers, of whom some were armed with swords and shields, and others with lances; one hundred and ninety-four crossbow-men and musketeers.

Out of these troops he selected the men who were to serve on the thirteen brigantines; each of which required twelve rowers and a captain, with twelve crossbow-men and musketeers. In this way the thirteen brigantines required two hundred and eighty men, who, with the additional number of artillerymen, amounted to three hundred and twenty-five. Next the cannon, with the necessary powder was distributed among them; and when all this was done, Cortes published the articles of war, which ran as follows:

First of all it was forbidden under a heavy penalty to blaspheme either against our Lord Jesus Christ, his blessed mother, the holy apostles, or against any of the saints in general.

Secondly, no one was to ill-use any of our allies, take anything from them, not even of the booty they might make, whether this consisted of gold, silver, jewels, or of anything else; for we were to bear in mind that they joined us in this war at our own particular request.

Thirdly, none of the men, either during day or night time, were to leave our head-quarters, whether to fetch provisions from any of the townships allied to us, or for any other purpose whatever. Any one found guilty of this would be severely punished.

Fourthly, every soldier was to supply himself with a sufficient number of arms and keep them in proper order; for we were to remember how well the Mexicans were provided with everything in the shape of weapons.

Fifthly, all gambling for horses or weapons was strictly forbidden.

Lastly, none of the men, whatever company they belonged to, were to lay themselves down to rest without being completely armed and were to keep their shoes on, to which an exception was merely granted in cases of urgent necessity when a person was severely wounded, or unable to do

duty; for we should be prepared to receive the enemy at a moment's notice.

Besides these the usual articles of war were again read over, which, among other things, threatened punishment of death to the sentinel who deserted his post or fell asleep while on duty. The same punishment would be inflicted on any soldier who left his quarters without his captain's permission, or who left his commanding officer in a moment of danger and took to flight.

CHAPTER CXLIX.

The manner in which Cortes selects the men who were to row the brigantines; of the commanders who were appointed to each, and of other matters.

Cortes on selecting the men who were to serve on board the brigantines could not find a sufficient number of sailors to row them. All the sailors who had come with us, with Narvaez, and with the vessels which had recently arrived from Jamaica, had been duly noted down, but even then there was not a sufficient number. Besides which many would not condescend to this work, saying, it was unreasonable to think of making rowers of them.

Cortes then turned his attention to those who daily went out a fishing, and found they were mostly natives of Palos, Moguer, Triana, or other coast towns, which were celebrated for producing capital sailors. All these persons were commanded under threats of severe punishment, to enter without delay upon the service of the brigantines. Many, indeed, who were men of noble birth, remonstrated with our general, and told him, it was insulting to think of setting them to such work; but Cortes paid no respect to persons, and by these means he mustered one hundred and fifty capital oars, who indeed had better days of it than we who had to fight on the causeways, and obtained a much greater share of booty than we did, as will be sufficiently seen hereafter.

As soon as each brigantine was fully equipped for war, Cortes ordered a flag, bearing the royal arms, to be hoisted; and a second one, bearing the number of the vessel. The following were the commanders appointed: viz. Pedro Barba, Garci Holguin, Juan de Limpias, the deaf Carvajal, Juan Xaramillo, Geronimo de la Mota, the other Carvajal, who now lives at an advanced age in the street San Francisco;

a certain Portillo, an excellent soldier, who had just arrived from Spain and had brought a beautiful wife with him. The naval captain Zamora, who lives at present in Guaxaca. A certain Colmero, who was both a good sailor and a good soldier. Further, Lerma, Gines, Nortes, Briones of Salamanca, Miguel Diaz de Auz, and one other officer, whose name has slipped my memory.

The whole of the crews were strictly enjoined to pay implicit obedience to their commanders; and any one who left his vessel was liable to severe punishment. The several commanders then received their particular instructions as to the manner in which they were to co-operate with the land forces.

All these matters had just been arranged when Cortes received intelligence that the Tlascallan chiefs were marching with a large body of troops, consisting of Tlascallans and Huexotzincans. The chief command of these had been intrusted to the younger Xicotencatl, the same who commanded against us in our battles with Tlascalla. He was likewise accompanied by his two brothers, the two younger sons of the excellent Don Lorenzo de Vargas. One of the chiefs of Cholulla likewise made his appearance, but with a very small body of men; for, though the Cholullans had broken off their alliance with Mexico from the time we had punished them so severely, yet they never stood upon the best of terms with us; on the contrary, they appeared as if waiting to see how matters would terminate, and then to side with the triumphant party. After our direful retreat from Mexico, they were almost upon the point of declaring against us.

When Cortes was informed of Xicotencatl's approach, who had come a day before the time appointed, he went out with Alvarado and several other officers to a distance of about a mile from Tezcuco, and welcomed him and his brothers with every demonstration of joy. Xicotencatl, with his men, marched forward in the best order, and all were accoutred in their best garments. Every company had a standard, on which was embroidered a white bird with expanded wings, being the arms of Tlascalla, and resembled an eagle. Every one of the men had a bunch of plumes stuck on his head; they struck up their war music, waved their flags, and continually cried out, "Long live the emperor, our master! Spain for ever! Tlascalla for ever!"

It took these troops about three hours before they had all entered the town, and our general ordered them to be provided with good quarters, and the best food we could get. When they had all entered the town, he once more bid them heartily welcome, assuring them he would enrich them all, and then desired them to rest from their fatigues,

adding, that he would let them know the next day the duty they would have to perform.

Almost at the very moment these Tlascallans were marching into Tezcuco, a letter was put into Cortes' hands from Hernando de Barrientos, who was at Chinantla, about 360 miles from Mexico. Barrientos related that, while he was exploring the mines, being left behind for that purpose by Pizarro, the Mexicans had attacked him, and killed three of his companions, and that he alone had been fortunate enough to escape to the inhabitants of Chinantla, who were at enmity with the Mexicans. This was the same people who had furnished us with those long lances in our battle against Narvaez.

Without wishing to repeat the whole contents of this letter, I will only state that Cortes, in answer to it, told him he was about to besiege Mexico, and cautioned him to keep on good terms with the caziques of the country, and not to leave that place until he should receive further intelligence from head-quarters; for he would run great danger of being murdered on the road by the Mexicans.

CHAPTER CL.

Of Cortes' further dispositions for the siege.

CORTES now divided the whole of our troops into three divisions. The first division, consisting of one hundred and fifty foot, all well armed with swords and shields, thirty horse, and eighteen musketeers and crossbow-men, was commanded by Alvarado, under whom Guiterrez de Badajoz, Andreas de Monjaraz, and Jorge de Alvarado had each the command of fifty men and a third part of the musketeers and crossbowmen; the cavalry being under the immediate command of Alvarado himself. To this division 8000 Tlascallans were added, and Alvarado, in whose division I also was, received orders to take up his position in the town of Tlacupa. Cortes particularly recommended us to furnish ourselves with good weapons, helmets, gorgets, and steel coverings for the legs, to protect our bodies from the destructive weapons of the Mexicans. These precautions were, indeed, very necessary; but, notwithstanding all our defensive armour, scarcely a day past by in which the enemy did not kill or wound some of our men.

The second division was placed under the command of Oli, and consisted of thirty horse, one hundred and sixty-five foot, and twenty crossbow-men and musketeers. Andreas de Tapia, Verdugo, and Lugo

commanded under him, he himself having the immediate command of the cavalry. To this division, likewise, 8000 Tlascallans were added, and they were to take up their position in the town of Cojohuacan, about eight miles from Tlacupa.

Sandoval was appointed to the command of the third division, consisting of twenty-four horse, fourteen crossbow-men and musketeers, and one hundred and fifty foot armed with shields and swords. To this division were added 8000 Indians from the townships of Chalco, Huexotzinco, and other places in alliance with us. Cortes appointed Luis Marin and Pedro de Ircio, two intimate friends of Sandoval, to command under him, the latter himself having the immediate command of the cavalry. This division was to take up a position near Iztapalapan, and Sandoval's instructions were to attack that town, and do as much damage there as he could, until he received further orders. Sandoval did not leave Tezcuco before Cortes was about to step on board, who himself took the chief command of the brigantines. On this flotilla there were altogether 325 men. Thus Sandoval, Oli, and Alvarado were each ordered off to different points: one marched to the left, the other to the right; and those who are not acquainted with the situation of this town or of the lake in general, would imagine that these divisions were removing from one common centre rather than approaching it. Each of these three captains received particular instructions for his plan of operation, and the next morning was fixed for our departure.

In order to be detained as little as possible, we sent off the whole body of Tlascallans in advance to the Mexican frontiers. These troops marched out in the best possible humour, under their commander Chichimeclatecl and other officers, but discovered that their commander-in-chief, the younger Xicotencatl, had remained behind. After considerable inquiries, it was found that he had secretly returned to Tlascalla on the previous night to take forcible possession of the caziquedom and territory of Chichimeclatecl. It appears, according to the accounts of the Tlascallans, that he wished to avail himself of this favorable opportunity of raising himself to supreme power in his own country, which the absence of Chichimeclatecl offered to him, who, in his opinion, was the only person that stood in his way since the death of Maxixcatzin, as he did not fear any opposition from his old blind father. This Xicotencatl, the Tlascallans further added, had never felt any real inclination to join us in the war against Mexico, but had frequently assured them it would terminate in the destruction of us all.[21]

When Chichimeclatecl received information of this, he instantly returned to Tezcuco in order to apprize Cortes of it. Our general, on

hearing this, despatched five distinguished personages of Tezcuco, and two Tlascallans, who were his particular friends, after Xicotencatl, to request his immediate return to his troops, in Cortes' name. They were to remind him that his father Lorenzo de Vargas would certainly have marched out against Mexico in person, if blindness and old age had not prevented him; that the whole population of Tlascalla continued loyal to his majesty, and that the revolt he wished to excite would throw dishonour on his own country. These representations Cortes desired should be accompanied by large promises, to induce him to return to obedience. Xicotencatl, however, haughtily replied, that he was determined to abide by his resolve, and our dominion in this country would not have continued thus long if his father and Maxixcatzin had followed his advice.

Upon this our general ordered an alguacil to repair in all haste with four of our horse and five distinguished men of Tezcuco to Xicotencatl's abode, to take him prisoner, and hang him without any further ceremony. "All kindness," added Cortes, "is thrown away upon this cazique. His whole time is spent in devising plots and creating mischief. I cannot suffer this to continue any longer; the matter has now come to a crisis."

As soon as Alvarado received information of these commands, he urgently begged of Cortes to pardon Xicotencatl. Our general replied that he would consider about it, though he secretly gave the alguacil peremptory orders to put him to death, which was accordingly done. Xicotencatl was hung in a town subject to Tezcuco, and thus an end was put to all his plottings. Many Tlascallans assured us that the elder Xicotencatl himself had cautioned Cortes against his son,[22] and had advised him to put him to death.

This affair delayed our departure from Tezcuco for one day; and thus it was not till the 13th of May, 1521, that we commenced our march. As our road lay for a considerable distance in the same direction, our division under Alvarado and that under Oli marched out at the same time. The first night we encamped in the township of Alcuman, to which place Oli had despatched some men in advance to prepare quarters for his troops, and had ordered that the houses which they took possession of should, by way of distinction, be decorated with green boughs. When we arrived with Alvarado, we found, to our surprise, that every house had been taken, and the two divisions were just about to settle the matter, sword in hand, when the officers stepped in between, and thereby put a stop to the dispute. But the insult which had thus been offered to us was not so easily to be forgotten;

when, therefore, this circumstance became known to Cortes, he sent off father Melgarejo and Luis Marin to us, with letters to every officer and soldier, in which he reproached us for quarrelling, and admonished us to keep peace with each other. From this moment Alvarado and Oli were never upon such friendly terms as formerly.

The following morning the two divisions continued their march, and we encamped for the night in a town subject to Mexico, but which was quite deserted by its inhabitants. This was likewise the case in Quauhtitlan, where we took up our quarters the next night.

Tenayucan and Escapuzalco, through which we marched the day following, were also quite deserted. Our Tlascallan friends spread themselves all through these townships, and entered into every house during the fore part of the evening, from which they brought in quantities of provisions. We adopted every military precaution for the night, as we were not far distant from Mexico, and could plainly hear the Mexicans, who were lying in crowds in their canoes on the lake and along the causeways, hooting and yelling fearfully throughout the whole of the night, and challenging us to the combat. Their object was to induce us to fall upon them in the dark, when they would have had a great advantage over us. We had, however, received a sufficient warning by our former misfortune, and very wisely kept ourselves as quietly as possible until next morning, which was a Sunday.

After father Juan Diaz had said mass, we commended ourselves to the protection of the Almighty, and both divisions marched forward to cut off the aqueduct of Chapultepec, which lies about two miles from Tlacupa, and supplies Mexico with water. On our way thither, we fell in with several bodies of Mexicans, who had received intelligence that this was to be the commencement of our operations against Mexico. The enemy had in every way the advantage ground over us, and attacked us vigorously with lances, arrows, and stones, by which three of our men were wounded; but we soon put them to flight, and they were so closely pursued by the Tlascallans that they lost twenty killed, and seven or eight were taken prisoners. We were now able to destroy the aqueduct without any further opposition, and the city of Mexico was deprived of this source of obtaining water during the whole of the siege.

As soon as we had destroyed this aqueduct, our officers determined to make an attempt upon one of the bridges on the causeway leading from Tlacupa. We had scarcely begun to move along the causeway when numbers of canoes, filled with troops, advanced swiftly from both sides, while other large bodies of the enemy came marching up the

causewny against us, so that we were quite astounded at the very sight. In the first encounter thirty of our men were wounded and three killed. Notwithstanding all this, we fought our way up to the first bridge. According to what we afterwards heard, it was the wish of the Mexicans that we should pass over the bridge; for we had no sooner done so than we were assailed by such terrific crowds, as to be unable to move. What indeed could we do on a causeway which was no more than eight paces in breadth, where we were attacked on all sides at once? Our crossbow-men and musketeers certainly kept up a continued fire on the canoes, but the enemy received but a trifling loss this way, for they had raised boards alongside of their canoes, by which their troops were sheltered from our fire. Those of the enemy's troops which attacked us on the causeway itself we certainly drove back each time into the water, but fresh troops kept pouring in too fast for us to gain much advantage this way. Here our cavalry was of no manner of use to us, while the horses were greatly exposed to the attacks of the enemy on each side of the causeway, and many were consequently wounded. If our cavalry attempted to pursue the enemy into the water, the latter had provided against this by palisades, behind which they retired, and stretched out against them their long lances, to which they had fastened the swords we unfortunately lost on our retreat from Mexico.

In this way the battle continued for upwards of an hour, the enemy each time returning to the attack with such excessive fury that, at length, we could stand our ground no longer: nor was this all, for we now saw another large fleet of canoes approaching with a fresh body of men, who were ordered to fall upon our rear. We therefore determined to retreat back along the causeway, for which purpose we ordered the Tlascallans to move off first, that we might effect our retreat in perfect good order. Here the Tlascallans had greatly embarrassed us in our movements, who, it is well known, never can fight standing in the water.

The instant the Mexicans perceived we were turning back, and saw the Tlascallans moving off the causeway, they set up most distracting yells, and attacked us man to man with great fierceness. It is indeed out of my power to describe it. The whole of the causeway was instantly covered with lances, arrows, and stones, besides that vast quantities fell into the water. When we had again reached the mainland, we returned fervent thanks to the Almighty for having rescued us from this severe battle.

Eight of our men were killed and fifty wounded: added to all this,

we were obliged to put up with the hootings and jeers of the enemy, who kept calling upon the Tlascallans to come with double their numbers next time, and they would very soon settle their impudence. Our first deeds of arms, therefore, merely consisted in destroying the aqueduct of Chapultepec, and in reconnoitring the lake along the causeway, in which we did not exactly reap much honour.

For the rest, we passed the following night very quietly in our quarters, posted our sentinels, and dressed our wounds. One of our horses was so severely wounded that it died soon after.

The following morning Oli determined upon taking up the position assigned to his division at Cojohuacan, about six miles further on; and however Alvarado and the other cavaliers might beg of him not to separate the two divisions, yet he would not alter his determination. Christobal de Oli was a man of uncommon bravery, whose pride was wounded at the unsuccessful attempt we had made upon the causeway, and he accused Alvarado of inconsiderateness for having ordered the attack. Nothing, therefore, could induce him to stay, and he marched off with his men to Cojohuacan.

The separation of the two divisions was very impolitic at this juncture; for if the Mexicans had been aware of the smallness of our numbers, and had attacked either of the divisions during the five following days, before the brigantines had arrived, we should with difficulty have escaped destruction. Both divisions, therefore, remained as quiet as the enemy would allow them, though not a day passed by that the Mexicans did not land troops to annoy us in our camp, and, if possible, to entice us into places where we should be unable to act, and they could attack us to greater advantage.

Sandoval, as we have seen, left Tezcuco with his division four days after the feast of Corpus Christi, and marched towards Iztapalapan. His route lay through townships which were either subject to, or in alliance with Tezcuco. As soon as he arrived at Iztapalapan, he commenced his military operations by burning down the greater portion of the houses which stood on the mainland.

It was not long before large bodies of Mexican troops arrived for the protection of Iztapalapan, with whom Sandoval had a severe skirmish, and drove them back again to their canoes; but still they continued to shower their arrows and darts upon him, and wounded several of his men.

During this conflict a thick smoke was seen to rise from several signal fires which had been lighted on the surrounding hills. This had been a signal to call in all the canoes of Mexico and of the other towns

situated on the lake, as Cortes had just run out from Tezcuco with the thirteen brigantines.

The first attack our general made with this fleet was against a rocky height on an island near Mexico. This place had been strongly fortified, and was garrisoned by a great number of Mexicans and inhabitants of other townships. All the canoes of Mexico, Xochimilco, Cojohuacan, Huitzilopuzco, Iztapalapan, and Mexicalzinco, had united in a body to oppose Cortes, which was the reason why the attack was carried on with so little vigour against Sandoval, who, however, was not able to do the enemy much damage, as most of the houses stood in the water; though, in the commencement of the attack, our allies had made many prisoners. In Iztapalapan, Sandoval found himself on a peninsula in the lake, and the only way by which he could reach Cojohuacan was by a causeway which ran half way through the lake, on which he would have been assailed from both sides by the enemy, without his being able to defend himself with much advantage.

When Cortes observed the vast number of canoes which kept continually crowding around the brigantines, he began to feel alarmed, and this not without reason, for their number amounted to above 4000. He therefore abandoned his attack upon the rock, and selected a position with his brigantines, where he would be able to observe all the enemy's movements, and steer off in any direction he might choose. He likewise issued orders to the respective commanders of the brigantines not to commence an attack on the canoes before the wind, which had just commenced blowing from the land, should have increased. When the Mexicans found our fleet was moving off again, they not incorrectly ascribed it to fear, and they immediately advanced with their canoes to fall upon the brigantines. There now suddenly arose a stiffish breeze, our rowers pulled with all their might, and Cortes ordered the brigantines to run right in among the canoes. Numbers were bored into the ground, many of the enemy killed and wounded, and all the rest of the canoes turned round, and made off at a rapid rate, to seek refuge between the houses built in the lake, where they could not be followed by the brigantines. This was our first naval engagement, and Cortes gained the victory, thanks be to the Almighty.

After this encounter he steered for Cojohuacan, where Oli had taken up his position. Here again he fell in with large bodies of the enemy, who lay in wait for him at a point of considerable danger, and attempted to carry off two of the brigantines. They attacked him at the same time from their canoes, and from the tops of the temples.

Cortes now fired in upon them with the cannon, and killed great numbers. The artillerymen fired away so incessantly upon this occasion, that all their powder was consumed, and some of them had their faces and hands burnt. Cortes then despatched the smallest brigantine to Iztapalapan, to bring away all the powder Sandoval had with him there, and wrote word to him not on any account to quit that place. He himself staid the two next days with Oli, on whose position the enemy continued their attacks without intermission.

I must now also relate what took place at this time in Tlacupa, where I was stationed with Alvarado.

When we received intelligence that Cortes had run out with the brigantines, we advanced along our causeway up to the bridge, but this time with greater precaution. Our cavalry was stationed in front of the causeway, while the remaining troops moved along in a close body up to the bridge, the crossbow-men and musketeers keeping up an incessant fire upon the enemy. In this way we renewed the attack each day, and repaired the gaps in the causeway, but three of our men had been killed.

In the meantime the enemy did Sandoval considerable damage from the tops of the houses which stood in the water, and he therefore resolved to attack those which he was best able to get at. Quauhtemoctzin then sent off a large body of troops to the assistance of the town, with commands to cut through the causeway in Sandoval's rear. Cortes observing a vast number of canoes going in the direction of Iztapalapan, instantly steered with the brigantines for the same place, and ordered Oli, with the whole of his division, to shape his course thither along the causeway. They found the Mexicans already hard at work in cutting through the causeway, and concluded from this that Sandoval was destroying the houses which stood in the water. They found him, as they had suspected, already in the heat of an engagement with the enemy, who, however, retired on the approach of the brigantines.

Cortes now ordered Sandoval to quit Iztapalapan with his troops, and to take up his position at Tepeaquilla, in front of the causeway, which leads from this place to Mexico. This Tepeaquilla is at present dedicated to our dear lady of Guadaloupe, where so many miracles have happened, and still daily take place.

CHAPTER CLI.

How Cortes assigns particular stations to the twelve brigantines, the thirteenth being considered unfit for service.

CORTES, our officers, and the whole of the troops were now convinced that it was impossible to fight our way to the city along the causeways, unless we were covered on each side by a couple of the brigantines. Our general therefore joined four of these to Alvarado's division, he himself retaining six others near his head-quarters, which he had taken up where Oli was stationed; the remaining two he sent to Sandoval, for the smallest brigantine was not considered of sufficient bulk to make head against the large canoes, and was taken out of the service altogether, and the men distributed among the crews of the other twelve.

As soon as the brigantines arrived at our station Alvarado placed two on each side of the causeway, which were to cover us as we advanced to the attack of the bridges. We now fought with better success than we had previously done for the brigantines kept off the canoes, and prevented them from attacking our flanks; so that we now succeeded in forcing some of the bridges, and in destroying several of the enemy's entrenchments. The conflict, however, was no less severe; on the contrary, the Mexicans made so good a use of their lances, arrows, and slings, that, although our jackets were thickly quilted with cotton, they wounded the greater part of our men; nor did they desist from the attack till night came on; but they had the great advantage over us, that they could relieve their troops from time to time, by pouring in fresh men, and could shower innumerable quantities of stones, arrows, and lances, upon our brigantines, from the tops of the houses. Indeed I cannot find a more appropriate expression than shower, although they alone can feel its full force who were present on the occasion. If we did at times succeed, with the utmost exertion, to force an entrenchment or a bridge, and we omitted to station a strong detachment to guard it, the enemy returned in the night, made another opening in the causeway, threw up larger entrenchments, and dug deep pits, which immediately filled with water, and these they covered slightly over, that we might sink down into them in the midst of the battle of the following day, when the canoes would hasten up to profit by the confusion, and carry off our men prisoners. For this purpose numbers of canoes were lying wait in places where they were out of the reach of our brigantines, though they were always ready at hand, if their assistance was

required. But the enemy had provided in another artful way to render our brigantines useless in certain spots of the lake, by driving numbers of stakes into the water, whose tops were just below the surface; so that it was often impossible for our vessels to avoid them, and they consequently stuck fast, and left our troops open to the attacks of the canoes.

I have before mentioned of what little use the cavalry was to us in our operations on the causeway; for whenever they did drive the Mexicans before them up to the bridges, the latter leaped into the water, and retreated behind the entrenchments which they had thrown up on the causeway itself, where other bodies of the enemy stood ready to receive them armed with extremely long lances, with which, and various kinds of projectiles, they severely wounded our horses; so that the owners of the horses were very unwilling to risk them in such unequal conflict; for at that time the ordinary price of a horse was from 800 to 1000 pesos.

When night came on, and released us from the attacks of the enemy, we returned to our encampment, and attended to our wounds, which we dressed with bandages steeped in oil. There was likewise a soldier among our troops, named Juan Catalan, who charmed the wounds, and the Lord Jesus blessed this man's exertions in a manner that he invariably succeeded in his cures. Indeed, if all our wounded, each day we renewed the attack, had remained behind in our camp, none of the companies could ever have sallied out with more than twenty men at a time. When our friends of Tlascalla observed how this man charmed the wounds, and how every one who was wounded applied to him for assistance, they likewise brought him all their wounded, and these were so very numerous, that his only occupation throughout the day consisted in charming wounds.

Our officers and ensigns were most exposed to the enemy's weapons, and were oftener wounded in consequence; for which reason a fresh set of men were each day appointed to carry our tattered colours. With all these hardships we had to suffer, it will at least be thought that we had plenty of food. But of this we were likewise deprived, and we should have thought ourselves fortunate if we had only had some refreshing food for our wounded; we had not even a cake of maize! Miserable indeed was our distress! The only means we had of keeping soul and body together was by eating herbs and cherries, and at last we had nothing to subsist on but wild figs; Cortes and Sandoval's divisions fared no better than ours, and the Mexicans likewise continued the attack upon them from morning to night. Every blessed day that

came they were obliged to advance fighting their way up to the bridges along the causeway; for the Mexicans, and the troops which lay in the other towns of the lake, merely awaited the morning dawn, when the signals were given from the summit of the great temple of Huitzilopochtli to rush out upon us both by land and water.

The operations of the besieged were carried on with perfect order, and it was previously settled where the different bodies of their troops were to direct the attack.

As we began to experience that our daily advancing along the causeway each time cost us a loss of men, besides that we gained little advantage by it, for the Mexicans returned in the night, and again took possession of the points we had forced, we determined to alter our plan of operations, and took up a position on a more spacious part of the causeway, where several towers rose up together, and where we should be able to quarter ourselves for the night. Though we were miserably off here, and had nothing to protect us from the rain, nor to cover us from the piercing rays of the sun, we were not to be deterred from our purpose. The Indian females who baked our bread were obliged to remain behind in Tlacupa, protected by our cavalry, and the Tlascallans, who at the same time covered our rear, that the enemy might not fall upon us from the mainland. After these precautions had been adopted, we began to carry out our principal object, which was to make ourselves master of the houses in the suburbs, and of the intervening canals. These last were then immediately filled up, and the houses pulled down; for, as I have before mentioned, it was difficult to destroy them by fire, as they were detached, and stood in the water. It was from the tops of the houses that we received most injury from the enemy; so that, by destroying these, we gained a considerable advantage. Whenever we had taken one of the enemy's entrenchments, a bridge, or forced any other strong position, we were obliged to occupy the spot night and day with our troops, which we regulated in the following manner:—Each company watched by turns; the first from the evening time until midnight; the second from midnight until a couple of hours before daylight; and the third from that time till morning, when they were relieved by forty other men. The watch was each time relieved by a like number, though none of these watches left the spot; but when the following arrived, the former lay themselves on the bare ground, and took a little repose; so that when daylight came there were always one hundred and twenty men collected together ready for action. On other nights, when we expected some sudden attack, the whole of the men marched up at once, and remained under arms until

the enemy approached. We had every reason to be upon our guard, for we learnt from several Mexican officers, whom we had taken prisoners in the different engagements, that Quauhtemoctzin and his generals had come to the determination of falling some day or night suddenly upon our encampment on the causeway; and concluded that, after they had destroyed us, they might easily make themselves masters of the two other causeways occupied by Sandoval and Cortes. To accomplish this finishing stroke, the nine towns lying in the lake, besides Tlacupa, Escapuzalco, and Tenayucan, were to cooperate with them. While we should thus be attacked on every side, they meant to carry off the Indian females with our baggage, which we had left behind in Tlacupa.

As soon as we received this information, we sent notice of it to the Tlascallans and our cavalry, who were stationed at Tlacupa, and ordered them to be particularly upon their guard, and to keep a sharp look out all day and night. Nor was it long before the enemy put their scheme into operation; for one midnight an immense body of Mexicans came storming up against us; a couple of hours after another such a body; and with daylight a third came pouring forth. At one time they moved up with the utmost silence; at another they came fiercely along with hideous yells; and it was terrible to behold the innumerable quantities of lances, stones, and arrows they showered upon us. Though they wounded many of our men, we valiantly maintained our ground, and drove them back with great loss. The Mexicans had at the same time attacked the cavalry and Tlascallans on the mainland at Tlacupa; the latter suffered severely, as they were never much upon their guard during night-time.

In this way, amidst rain, wind, frost, up to our ancles in mud, and covered with wounds, we patiently bore our fatigues, with a morsel of maize cake, a few herbs and figs to stay our hunger, which was the more gnawing from the incessant exertions of our bodily strength. Yet, however bravely we might fight, we advanced but slowly, and the little advantages we gained cost us a number of killed and wounded. The bridges we forced were as often retaken by the enemy, and if we filled up an opening in the causeway new gaps were made, and this continued day after day, until the Mexicans altered their plan of operations, as will shortly be seen.

After thus enumerating these continued scenes of bloodshed and slaughter which took place at our station, and those of Cortes and Sandoval, the reader will ask, what advantage we had derived in destroying the aqueduct of Chapultepec? I must confess, very little;

for the enemy received, during the night-time, a plentiful supply of water as well as of provisions from the towns surrounding Mexico, by means of their light canoes.

In order to cut off these supplies, Cortes determined that two brigantines should cruise about the lake during the whole of the night to capture these canoes, and it was agreed that the provisions found in them should be equally distributed among the three divisions. Although we sensibly felt the absence of our brigantines during the attacks which the enemy made upon us in the night-time, yet we soon began to find what great advantage we had gained by thus diminishing the enemy's supplies. No day passed without our brigantines capturing several of these transports laden with maize, fowls, and other necessaries of life, though a few always managed to elude our vessels and slip into the town. The Mexicans, therefore, were determined if possible to rid themselves of these troublesome brigantines, and thought of the following stratagem: They fitted out thirty large pirogues, manned with their best rowers and most courageous warriors, which they ran out during the night-time and concealed them among the reeds of the lake, where they could not be seen by the brigantines. At a short distance from the place where the pirogues lay concealed, stakes had been driven into the water, of which it was intended our two vessels should run foul. In the twilight the enemy sent out two or three canoes which were covered with green boughs, as if laden with provisions for Mexico; and these received instructions to move off in a direction where it was presumed they would be pursued by our brigantines.

As soon as our brigantines espied the two canoes they went in pursuit of them, the latter keeping close into the reeds, and continually nearing the spot where the pirogues lay in ambush. The greater exertions the canoes made to escape, the more eager were our brigantines in pursuit, and when these were close in upon the spot where the pirogues lay concealed, the latter suddenly darted forth from the reeds, and attacked the brigantines on all sides. In an instant all the officers, soldiers, and sailors were wounded, nor could the brigantines seek refuge in flight, as they had become entangled among the stakes. In this unfortunate affair we lost one of the brigantines and two of our officers, one of whom, named Portillo, a man of great courage, and who had served in Italy, was killed on the spot; the other was Pedro Barba, a very clever officer, who died of his wounds three days after. Both these brigantines belonged to Cortes' division, and he was sorely grieved at the loss we had thus sustained; but we

very shortly after paid the enemy out in their own coin, as will presently be seen.

In the meantime Cortes and Sandoval, with their divisions, had many severe encounters with the enemy, but particularly Cortes, as he insisted that all the houses which were taken should be immediately pulled down, and the gaps in the causeway filled up. So that every inch of ground was rendered secure and level, of which possession was taken.

Alvarado had received similar instructions from our general, and was not to pass over any bridge or canal before the part which intersected the causeway was completely filled up; nor to advance beyond any house until it was levelled to the ground.

These commands were strictly adhered to, and with the woodwork and stones of the houses which we pulled down we filled up the openings in the causeways. In all these operations, and indeed during the whole of the siege, our Tlascallan friends lent us the most efficient services. When the Mexicans found we were thus by degrees pulling down their houses and filling up the canals, they determined to alter their plan of operation, and commenced by cutting a wide and deep opening in that part of the causeway lying between us and the city; they deepened the lake on each side of this opening, and threw up entrenchments near it; strong stakes were then driven into the water to keep off our brigantines, or that they might run foul of them on coming to our assistance. Besides this, great numbers of canoes full of men were constantly lurking in places where we could not see them, with orders not to rush out upon us before we had advanced up to the entrenchments on the causeway.

One Sunday morning large bodies of the enemy came advancing towards us from three different points, and fell so fiercely upon us that it was with much difficulty we could maintain our ground. I had forgotten to mention that Alvarado had posted half of the cavalry on the causeway, for they no longer run so great a risk of being killed, as most of the houses lay in ruins, and there was more space for them to manœuvre in, without their being exposed to the attacks of the enemy from the house-tops or from the lake. The enemy, as I have just said, advanced bravely from three different points, one body from the quarter where the deep gap had been made in the causeway, the other from the direction where the houses lay in ruins, the third from the side of Tlacupa, so that we were almost surrounded. Our cavalry, with the Tlascallans, had the good fortune to cut their way through the dense crowds which fell upon our rear, while our foot bravely op-

posed the two other bodies, which, after a few moments' desperate fighting began to give ground; but this was a mere stratagem of the Mexicans to allow us to take possession of the first entrenchment, and after a short stand they even retreated beyond the second. We thought we had already gained the victory, and waded through the shallow part of the water in vigorous pursuit of the enemy up to some large buildings and towers; while they, to deceive us the more effectually, constantly faced about to fling their arrows at us; and, when we in the least expected it, they suddenly turned round upon us and in an instant we were surrounded and attacked with excessive fury from all sides. It was impossible to resist their overwhelming numbers, and we began to retreat towards the causeway in the best order we could, with our ranks firmly closed. The first opening in the causeway which we had just taken from the enemy was already occupied by numerous canoes, so that we were compelled to make for the opening which the enemy had recently cut, where the water was very deep, and additional large holes had been dug. Here we had no other resource left than to make our way, either by swimming or wading through; but most of us got into the deep holes, when the canoes were instantly at hand to take advantage of our perilous situation.

On this occasion five of our men were made prisoners, and immediately taken into the presence of Quauhtemoctzin; and most of us were severely wounded. The brigantines certainly made every attempt to assist us, but were unable to come near enough, owing to the heavy stakes that had been driven into the water, between which they stuck fast, and were instantly assailed by showers of missile sfrom the house-tops and the numberless canoes, by which two of the rowers were killed, and the greater part of the troops on board wounded.

It was indeed a real wonder that all of us did not perish in these deep gaps. I myself was in extreme danger, for several Mexicans had already laid hands on me, but I succeeded in freeing one of my arms, and the Almighty gave me power to cut my way through the enemy, though I was severely wounded in the arm, and just as I had reached a place of safety I fell down breathless and exhausted. This sudden prostration of strength was no doubt owing to the extraordinary exertions I had made to disengage myself from the enemy's grasp, and to the quantity of blood I had lost. I gave myself up for lost when the Mexicans laid hold of me, and commended my soul to God and the holy Virgin.

Alvarado, with the cavalry, had hard work to keep off the numerous bodies who attacked our rear from the side towards Tlacupa, and had

not advanced up to this fearful passage; there was only one cavalry soldier, recently arrived from Spain, who ventured too far, and perished with his horse. Alvarado was already coming up to our assistance, with a small body of horse, but fortunately not before we had made good our retreat beyond the deep gap; for, had he arrived a few minutes earlier, we should, no doubt, have faced about, fought our way back again into the town, and the Mexicans would certainly have cut us off to a man.

This battle took place on a Sunday, and the Mexicans were so elated with the victory they had gained over us, that they fell upon our camp with renewed courage, and in so large a body that they would certainly have taken it by storm but for our cannon and the desperate courage we displayed for the preservation of our lives. During this night, the whole of us remained under arms ready for action, and the horses stood ready saddled and bridled. Cortes was excessively grieved at the defeat we had sustained, and despatched a letter to Alvarado by one of the brigantines in which he told him not, under any circumstances, in future to pass beyond a gap or opening in the causeway before it had been quite filled up; and to keep the horses saddled all day and night, and to observe the utmost vigilance.

Our recent defeat having taught us prudence, we set about filling up the larger opening with the utmost expedition, and completed the work in four days; though it was a labour of great difficulty, and we were the whole time exposed to the attacks of the enemy, who killed six of our men and wounded several others. During the night, each company watched by turns to prevent the Mexicans from destroying our day's work.

As the Mexicans were encamped over against us, we could observe how they regulated their night watches: they were relieved four times during the night, and the men posted at such distances around a large fire, which was kept up till morning, that they could not be seen excepting at the moments when they poked the fire or when the next watch came to relieve. On some nights the fire became extinguished by the rain, but it was instantly relit; though everything was done in the utmost silence and not a word was exchanged, for they only communicated with each other by whistling. Many a time when we heard the guard approaching to relieve the watch, our crossbow-men and musketeers would shoot in among them at random, but without doing them the slightest injury, as they were posted in places which, even during broad daylight, were beyond the reach of our fire, particularly behind a deep ditch, which they had recently dug, and strengthened

by a palisade and breastwork. The Mexicans never omitted to return the compliment, and let fly many an arrow at us in the same way.

The conflict on the causeway was daily renewed, and we always made our attacks in the best order possible, so that we soon became masters of the fosse just mentioned, behind which the enemy encamped at nights, but we had each time to encounter vast bodies of men, and the whole of us were more or less wounded. After fighting the whole day until nightfall, there was naturally nothing further to be done than to return to our former position; but each time we commenced our retreat, other bodies of the enemy fell furiously upon us. The Mexicans were confident they should, one time or other, be able to annihilate us during one of these retreats, and they rushed upon us with the very fury of tigers, and came in so close upon us that we were compelled to fight foot to foot. But after a time, when we had got more accustomed to their mode of fighting, we first ordered the Tlascallans off the causeway; for these were very numerous, and delighted in combating with the Mexicans, under our immediate protection, though they only embarrassed our movements, of which the enemy were sly enough to take advantage. As soon as we considered the Tlascallans sufficiently in advance of us, we firmly closed our ranks and began our retreat, which was covered by our crossbow-men and musketeers, and by the four brigantines, which kept up with us, two on each side of the causeway. When we reached our encampment we dressed our wounds with bandages steeped in warm oil, and ate our supper off the maize-cakes, the herbs, and the figs which were sent us from Tlacupa. When this was finished, a strong detachment was again posted for the night at the opening in the causeway, and when daylight broke forth the battle was renewed. Such was our life, day after day; and however early we might march out, we always found the enemy ready to receive us, or they had already advanced up to our outposts and defied us to the combat under the most abusive language. Cortes, with his division, fared no better than we did; the fighting was continued night and day, and many of his men were killed and wounded. For the rest, matters stood with him exactly as they did with us on the causeway of Tlacupa, and two brigantines still continued cruizing on the lake at night-time to intercept the canoes laden with water and provisions for Mexico.

On one occasion two Mexicans of distinction were captured, who informed Cortes that forty pirogues and a great number of canoes lay hid among the reeds of the lake to make another attempt upon the two brigantines. Our general returned these men many thanks for what they had communicated, made them some presents, and promised

to bestow considerable lands upon them after Mexico should be taken; they then described to him the spot where the armed pirogues lay in ambush, and the different places where the heavy stakes had been driven in, of which it was intended the brigantines should run foul while pursuing the pirogues in their sham flight.

Cortes was now determined to pay the enemy out in their own coin, and in the night-time concealed six of our brigantines in a place where the reeds stood very thick, at about a mile distant from the spot where the pirogues lay in ambuscade. Each brigantine was entirely covered with green boughs, and the men on board were ordered not to make the least noise during the whole of the night. Very early next morning, Cortes ordered one of our other brigantines to run out as usual to waylay the convoys of provisions going to Mexico. Both the above-mentioned distinguished Mexicans were taken on board to point out the place where the pirogues lay concealed, as our brigantine was purposely to steer in that direction. As soon as the Mexicans observed the brigantine approaching, they run out two of their canoes into the lake to allure the brigantine to their pursuit. The stratagem was laid on both sides in the very same way, and it was now only to be seen which should outdo the other. Our brigantine sharply pursued the two canoes, which were moving off in the direction of the concealed pirogues, but suddenly turned round as if she durst not venture nearer land. The instant the pirogues found the brigantine was turning back, they rushed forth out of the reeds and pulled away at their utmost speed in pursuit of her. The brigantine pretended to seek her safety in flight, and steered in the direction where our six others lay concealed, the pirogues following with the utmost confidence. When these were near enough, a shot was fired as a signal to the Spanish vessels, upon which they, in their turn, rushed out upon the pirogues and canoes with the utmost velocity, and bored several of them into the ground. Now the other brigantine also came up which had shammed flight, so that many of the canoes were captured, and numbers of the enemy killed and wounded. From this moment the Mexicans never again attempted similar stratagems on the lake, nor durst they venture so close in our neigbourhood with their convoys of provisions.

When the inhabitants of those towns which lay in the lake found that we were daily gaining fresh victories both by land and water, and that our allies of Chalco, Tezcuco, Tlascalla, and other districts, became more and more closely united to us, they began to consider the great losses they continually sustained, and the numbers of prisoners we took. The chiefs of these towns, therefore, held a conference among them-

selves; which ended in their sending an embassy to Cortes to sue for peace, and humbly to beg forgiveness for the past; adding, that they had been obliged to obey the commands of Quauhtemoctzin.

Cortes was uncommonly rejoiced to find these people were coming to their senses, and we others belonging to the divisions of Alvarado and Sandoval likewise congratulated ourselves on this circumstance.

Our general received the ambassadors kindly, and told them their towns had certainly deserved severe punishment, but he would, nevertheless, pardon them. The towns which sued for peace on this occasion were Iztapalapan, Huitzilopuzco, Cojohuacan, Mizquic, and all the other towns lying in that part of the lake which contained sweet water.

On this occasion Cortes declared that he would not alter his present position until Mexico itself had sued for peace, or that the town was conquered by force of arms.

The above-mentioned towns were now ordered to assist us with all their canoes and troops in the siege of the metropolis, and to furnish us with provisions. They promised faithfully to obey these commands, joined us with all their armed men, but were very sparing with their supplies of provisions.

In our division, under Alvarado, there was no room to quarter any of these new troops, which those who have visited this country during the months of June, July, and August, can easily imagine, as the whole surrounding neighbourhood is covered with water. The fighting on the causeways in the meantime continued without intermission, and by degrees we had taken a number of temples, houses, bridges, and canals, which latter we instantly filled up with the ruins of the buildings we pulled down, and every foot of ground we gained from the enemy was instantly secured by our troops; yet, with all our exertions and watchfulness, the enemy still succeeded in making fresh apertures in the causeway, behind which they threw up new entrenchments.

As the three companies of which our division was composed considered it a dishonour that one company should constantly be employed in filling up the canals, while the others were fighting, Alvarado, to put an end to all feelings of jealousy, arranged that the three companies should perform the same duties alternately.

By pursuing this mode of operation, in which we were ably assisted by the Tlascallans, we by degrees pulled down everything before us, so that at last the town lay open to our view. It was only in the evening, when we returned to our encampment, that the whole of the three companies were again under arms, as at that time we had most to fear from the enemy.

Cortes and Sandoval had likewise similar toils to go through day and night. On the land side they were incessantly attacked by immense bodies of the enemy, and from the lake by innumerable armed canoes. Cortes on one occasion marched with his division along the causeway, to force a very broad and deep opening, which the Mexicans had strengthened by means of a palisade and mound, defended by a large body of troops. Cortes finding it was impossible to pass across this opening but by swimming, ordered his men to make the attempt; but they were so vigorously assailed by the enemy from the entrenchments, and those stationed on the house-tops, who literally showered down stones upon them, while the canoes attacked them from each side of the opening, that a great number of his men were wounded, and a few killed. Here the brigantines were rendered totally useless, by the large stakes which had been driven into the water. Cortes and the whole of his troops were often on the brink of destruction; as it was, he had four men killed, and above thirty wounded. At length, by dint of hard fighting, he succeeded in forcing this formidable point; but the day was already so far advanced, that there was no time left to fill up the wide aperture, and he therefore sounded a retreat, in which he had again to fight his way through dense crowds of the enemy, who wounded the whole of his men, and the greater part of the Tlascallans.

Quauhtemoctzin now determined to adopt a new plan of operation, and this he commenced on St. John's day, in the summer month, the very day we made our second entry into Mexico, after the defeat of Narvaez. This day, it seems, the monarch had purposely fixed upon to attack the three divisions at the same moment with the whole of his armed force, both by land and water. It was his firm resolve to destroy us all at once, and his idols encouraged him to make the attempt. The attack was to commence before break of day, when it was yet dark, and the Mexicans had provided against the possibility of our obtaining any assistance from the brigantines, by driving numbers of additional stakes into the water. They now fell upon us with such fierceness and determination, that they would certainly have stormed our camp itself, if the one hundred and twenty men who had the watch had not been veterans in service. We were certainly very nigh our destruction, and had fifteen men wounded, of whom two died within the space of eight days. The two following nights the enemy sallied out in a similar manner, but we each time repulsed them with considerable loss. Cortes and Sandoval were likewise attacked in the same way.

Quauhtemoctzin, with his generals and papas, finding that no ad-

vantage was to be gained over us in this way, determined to attack our position at Tlacupa with his united forces. This was accordingly put into practice as soon as day began to dawn, and they fell upon us from all sides with great intrepidity, and threw our line into disorder; but at this moment it pleased the Almighty to refresh our strength; our troops rallied again, and in their turn fell courageously upon the infuriated foe. Our brigantines too lent us what assistance they could, and the cavalry, with lances fixed, spurred their horses on, while our crossbow-men and musketeers, strove to do their utmost; we others, armed with swords, thrusting and cutting in among the enemy most valiantly, so that at last we drove them back. This was a more terrible battle than any we had fought on the causeways. Alvarado himself was wounded in the head, and eight of our men were killed. If the Tlascallans had likewise encamped this night on the causeway, we should no doubt have suffered more severely, as their numbers would have embarrassed our movements; but experience had taught us prudence, and each night we ordered them to draw off to Tlacupa, and we only considered ourselves safe when assured they had left the causeway.

In this engagement we slew a great number of the enemy, and among the many men we took prisoners there were four personages of high rank.

By this time the reader will certainly be wearied of reading of battles which were every day renewed; but I have not exaggerated them, for during the ninety-three days we lay before this great and strong city, we were compelled to fight both day and night almost without intermission; and certainly, of all these numerous engagements, I am at least bound to mention the most striking occurrences. If I were desirous of relating every circumstance I should never finish, and my book would resemble 'Amadis de Gaule,' and other such romances, whose authors can find no end to their pretty stories. I will, however, be as brief as possible in my further account of this siege, and hasten on to St. Hippolytus' day, when we subdued this vast city, and took Quauhtemoctzin, with all his generals, prisoners. But, before we were so far successful, we suffered great hardships, and the whole of us were near perishing in the attempt, particularly the division under Cortes, as the reader will shortly see.

CHAPTER CLII.

How the Mexicans defeated Cortes, and took sixty-two of his men prisoners, who were sacrificed to their idols; our general himself being wounded in the leg.

CORTES, finding at length that it was impossible to fill up all the canals, gaps, and openings in the causeway, and that the Mexicans always destroyed at night what we had completed in the day, reopening the apertures we had filled up, and throwing up new entrenchments, called the principal officers of his division together, to deliberate on the present state of the siege. He told them the men would not be able to continue this fatiguing mode of warfare much longer, and he therefore proposed to them that the three divisions should fall upon the city at the same moment, and fight their way up to the Tlatelulco, and there encamp with the troops. Cortes at the same time wrote to Alvarado and Sandoval, desiring them also to deliberate on this point with their officers and soldiers. From that place, he added, they would be able to attack the enemy in the streets, and not have to encounter such severe engagements, or make those dangerous retreats every evening, nor have everlastingly to toil in filling up the openings and canals.

As it always happens in such cases, opinions were very different. Some pronounced this plan to be altogether unadvisable, and were for pursuing the present plan of operation, which was, to pull down the houses as we advanced, and fill up the openings. Those of us who were of this opinion gave as our principal reason for so thinking, that if we fortified ourselves in the proposed way on the Tlatelulco, the causeways must fall into the hands of the Mexicans, who, with the vast number of men at their command, would undoubtedly reopen the hollows we had filled up, and make other fresh apertures in the causeways. In this great square we should night and day be assailed by the enemy; while our brigantines would not be able to come to our assistance, on account of the stakes driven in the water. In short, we should be surrounded on all sides, and the Mexicans would be masters of the town, of the lake, and of the surrounding neighbourhood.

This, our opinion,[23] we took care to draw up in writing, to avoid a recurrence of what took place on our unfortunate retreat from Mexico.

Cortes indeed listened to our reasons for objecting to his plan, but nevertheless determined that the three divisions, including the cavalry, should make an attempt on the following day to fight their way up to the Tlatelulco, and that the Tlascallans, with the troops of Tezcuco, and

of the towns which had recently subjected themselves to our emperor, should cooperate with us; the latter were more particularly to assist us with their canoes.

The following morning, accordingly, after we had heard mass, and commended ourselves to the protection of God, the three divisions sallied forth from their respective encampments.

On our causeway we had forced a bridge and an entrenchment, after some very hard fighting, for Quauhtemoctzin sent out terrific masses to oppose us; so that we had great numbers of wounded, and our friends of Tlascalla above one thousand. We already thought victory was on our side, and we kept continually advancing.

Cortes, with his division, had fought his way across a very deep opening, of which the opposite sides were merely connected by an extremely narrow path, and which the artful Mexicans had purposely so contrived, as they justly foresaw what would take place.

Cortes, with the whole of his division, now sure of victory, vigorously pursued the enemy, who from time to time faced about, to fly their arrows and lances at him; but all this was a mere stratagem on their part, to entice Cortes further into the city; and this object was entirely accomplished.

The wheel of fortune now suddenly turned against Cortes, and the joyous feelings of victory were changed into bitter mourning; for while he was eager in pursuit of the enemy, with every appearance of victory, it so happened that his officers never thought to fill up the large opening which they had crossed. The Mexicans had taken care to lessen the width of the causeway, which in some places was covered with water, and at others with a great depth of mud and mire. When the Mexicans saw that Cortes had passed the fatal opening without filling it up, their object was gained. An immense body of troops, with numbers of canoes, which lay concealed for this purpose in places where the brigantines could not get at them, now suddenly rushed forth from their hiding places, and fell upon this ill-fated division with incredible fierceness, accompanied by the most fearful yells. It was impossible for the men to make any stand against this overwhelming power, and nothing now remained for our men but to close their ranks firmly, and commence a retreat. But the enemy kept rushing on in such crowds, that our men, just as they had retreated as far back as the dangerous opening, gave up all further resistance, and fled precipitately. Cortes indeed strove to rally his men, and cried out to them, "Stand! stand firm, gentlemen! is it thus you turn your backs upon the enemy?" But all his commands were fruitless here, and every one strove to save his own life. Now the awful consequences of the neglect to

fill up the opening in the causeway began to show themselves. In front of the narrow path, which the canoes had now broken down, the Mexicans wounded Cortes in the leg, took sixty Spaniards prisoners, and killed six horses. Several Mexican chiefs had already laid hands on our general, but with great exertion he tore himself from their grasp, and at the same moment the brave Christobal de Olea (who must not be confounded with Christobal de Oli) came up to his assistance, cut down one of the Mexican chiefs who had seized hold of Cortes, and rescued his general, by cutting his way through the enemy sword in hand, assisted by another excellent soldier, called Lerma. But this heroic deed cost Olea his life, and Lerma was very nigh sharing a like fate. During this dubious conflict for the rescue of our general's person several other of our men had by degrees hastened up to his assistance, who, though themselves covered with wounds, boldly risked their lives for Cortes. Antonio de Quiñones, the captain of his guards, had likewise hastened up; they now succeeded in dragging Cortes out of the water, and, placing him on the back of a horse, he reached a place of safety. At this instant his major domo, Christobal de Guzman, came up with another horse for him; but the Mexicans, who had become excessively daring, took him prisoner, and instantly carried him into the presence of Quauhtemoctzin. The enemy in the meantime pursued Cortes and his troops up to their very encampment, hooting and yelling most fearfully.

We under Alvarado had likewise advanced along our causeway with like confidence of victory; but, when we least expected it, an immense body of Mexicans, completely clothed in their military costume, rushed out upon us with the most dissonant howls, and threw at our feet five bloody heads of our countrymen, whom they had captured of Cortes' division. "See these heads!" they cried; "we mean to kill you all in the same way we have Malinche and Sandoval, with the whole of their troops! These are some of their heads; you will certainly know them again." Under these and similar threats they continued to surround us on all sides, and fell so furiously upon us that all our courageous fighting was to no purpose: yet they were unable to break through our firmly closed ranks, and we began to retreat with a steady step, after we had sent the Tlascallans in advance to clear the causeway and the dangerous passages. The Tlascallans, at the sight of the five bleeding heads, had really credited the enemy's shout of triumph, that Malinche, with Sandoval and all their teules, had been killed; and they were seized with sudden terror.

As we were thus retreating, we continually heard the large drum

beating from the summit of the chief temple of the city. Its tone was mournful indeed, and sounded like the very instrument of Satan. This drum was so vast in its dimensions that it could be heard from eight to twelve miles distance. Every time we heard its doleful sound, the Mexicans, as we subsequently learnt, offered to their idols the bleeding hearts of our unfortunate countrymen. But we had not nearly accomplished our retreat; for the enemy attacked us from the house-tops, from out their canoes, and from the mainland at the same time, while fresh troops were constantly pouring in. At this moment Quauhtemoctzin commanded the large horn to be sounded, which was always a signal to his troops that he allowed them no choice but death or victory. With this at the same time was mingled the melancholy sound of the drum from the temple top, which filled the Mexicans with terrific fury, and they ran headlong against our swords. It was really a horrible sight, which I am unable to describe, though even at this moment it comes vividly to my mind. If the Almighty had not lent us additional strength, we must all have perished, as the whole of us were wounded. To Him alone we are indebted for our preservation, and without His aid we should never again have reached our quarters. Indeed, I cannot sufficiently praise God, who this time again, as on so many other occasions, rescued me out of the hands of the Mexicans. When we had reached our encampment, a brisk charge of our cavalry upon the enemy made somewhat open space for us; but we were mostly indebted to our two brass cannon mounted in front of our camp, which were continually fired among the dense crowds of the enemy on the causeway, each shot mowing numbers of them down. But the Mexicans, confident of victory, kept continually advancing to the attack, and poured showers of stones and lances into our very quarters. No one rendered more effectual service on this day than a cavalier named Pedro Moreno, who is still living in Puebla: for, at this moment of imminent danger, he himself served our cannon, as our artillerymen were all either killed or unable to serve from their wounds. This Pedro Moreno had indeed, on all occasions, proved himself an excellent warrior, yet it was particularly on this day that we were so much indebted to his assistance. The severity of our numerous wounds, and the distress we were in, was all rendered more terrible from the uncertainty we were in respecting the fate of Cortes' and Sandoval's divisions, as the distance between us was full two miles. The words the Mexicans had uttered when they threw the five bleeding heads at our feet, that Malinche and Sandoval, with all their teules, had been cut to pieces, still rung in our ears, and we suffered intense anxiety. Though we had firmly closed

our ranks, and were able to defend ourselves against the furious attacks of the enemy, yet we thought we should be obliged to succumb in the end.

While we were thus assailed by the enemy by land, numerous canoes attacked the brigantines, from one of which the enemy succeeded in carrying off one man alive, besides killing three others, and wounding the captain, with all the men on board. This brigantine would certainly have fared much worse if the one under the command of Juan Xamarillo had not come up to its assistance.

One of these brigantines, under Juan de Limpias Caravajal, had got so jammed in between the stakes that it was with difficulty she was got afloat again. It was on this occasion that Caravajal lost his hearing, by over exertion of his strength. He now lives at Puebla, and fought on that day so courageously, and knew so well how to spur on the men at the oars, that he succeeded in breaking through the stakes and rescuing the brigantine from falling into the enemy's hands. This was the first of our brigantines which had succeeded in breaking through the stakes.

By this time, Cortes, with his division, had also reached his encampment; but here the enemy fell upon him anew, threw three of our countrymen's heads among his troops, crying out, at the same time, that these were some of the heads of Sandoval's and Alvarado's men, whom they had put to death, with all their teules!

At this sight Cortes was completely dismayed; nevertheless he strove to hide his feelings, and commanded his officers to keep the ranks firmly closed, and oppose a solid front to the enemy. At the same time he despatched Tapia, with three horse, to Tlacupa, to see how matters stood with our division, and, in case we had not suffered an entire defeat, to keep in a firm body together, and observe the utmost vigilance both night and day; but this we had of course done without requiring to be reminded of it.

Tapia and his companions fulfilled their commands with the utmost expedition; and, though they had a skirmish in a dangerous pass where Quauhtemoctzin had posted a strong detachment, intending thereby to cut off our line of communication, yet they arrived safe in our camp, though all four were wounded. They still found us hotly engaged with the enemy, but rejoiced exceedingly to see how courageously we defended ourselves. After conveying Cortes' instructions to us, they related what had taken place with his division, but took care not to tell the whole truth, for they said there were only twenty-five killed, and that all the rest of the troops were in excellent condition.

We must now turn to Sandoval, who was advancing victoriously along the causeway, until the Mexicans, after Cortes' defeat, turned the great body of their troops against him, and he was soon obliged to commence a retreat. Two of his men were killed, and all the others wounded, he himself in three different places, on the head, thigh, and arm. The enemy likewise threw in among his men six bleeding heads of our fellow-soldiers, crying out that those were the heads of Malinche, Alvarado, and other officers, and that he and his men would share a similar fate. They then fell upon him with increased fury: but the brave Sandoval was not to be discouraged by this; he ordered his men to close their ranks more firmly, and, as the causeway was very narrow, he first ordered the Tlascallans, who were in great numbers in his division, to march off the causeway, and then commenced his retreat under cover of his brigantines, the musketeers, and crossbow-men. It was, however, no easy task, as his men were terribly wounded and altogether disheartened. As soon as Sandoval had reached the end of the causeway, the Mexicans surrounded him on all sides; but he emboldened his officers and soldiers so, that they kept in a body together, cut their way through the enemy, and arrived safely in their camp, where they were able to adopt every military precaution for its defence.

Sandoval, now considering his troops out of danger, gave the command of his division to captain Luis Marin; and, after his wounds were bandaged up, he set off, accompanied by two horse, for Cortes' head-quarters. On his road he was continually harassed by bodies of the enemy; for, as I have above mentioned, Quauhtemoctzin had everywhere stationed troops in order to cut off our communication.

Sandoval, on coming up to Cortes, said to him, "Alas! general, what a shocking business this has been! Thus miserably have your great schemes terminated!" At these words, tears started from Cortes' eyes, and he cried out, "O! my son Sandoval! if this misfortune has befallen us for my sins, I have not been so entirely the cause of it as you suppose. The royal treasurer Juan de Alderete neglected to do his duty, and did not obey my orders to fill up the opening in the causeway. The man is not accustomed to war, nor does he know how to obey."

Alderete was standing by when Cortes uttered these words, and he could not restrain himself from retorting the guilt upon Cortes, and maintained that when the latter was advancing victoriously forward, he had spurred his men on to follow quickly at his heels, and cried out, "Forward, cavaliers!" Nothing had at all been mentioned about filling up the opening in the causeway, otherwise he, with the company under

his command, would certainly have attended to it. Others again reproached Cortes for not having sooner ordered off the numerous body of allies from the causeway; and, in short, many disagreeable remarks were made on both sides, which I would rather not repeat here.

During this sharp altercation, two of the brigantines which had accompanied Cortes as he advanced along the causeway, made their reappearance. Nothing had been seen or heard of these for a length of time, and they had been given up as lost. It appears they had become jammed in between the stakes, in which awkward position they were attacked by numbers of canoes. At length, after a great deal of hard fighting, they succeeded, with the assistance of a strong breeze, and the utmost exertions of their oars, to break through the stakes and gain the deep water, but the whole of the men on board were wounded. Cortes was exceedingly rejoiced at their safe return, for he had given them up for lost, but had not mentioned this to his troops, that they might not become more disheartened than they already were.

Upon this Cortes despatched Sandoval in all haste to Tlacupa to see how matters stood with our division, to assist us in the defence of our encampment, if, at least, we were not totally overthrown. Francisco de Lugo was ordered to accompany him thither, as it was naturally to be supposed that small detachments of the enemy were everywhere dispersed. Cortes acquainted Sandoval at the same time that he had previously despatched Tapia with three horse there for the same purpose, but feared they must have been killed on the road.

When Sandoval was about to mount his horse, Cortes embraced him, with these words: "Go, for heaven's sake! You see I cannot be everywhere at the same moment: to you I intrust the chief command of the three divisions for the present, as I am wounded and almost exhausted with fatigue. I beg of you rescue our three divisions from destruction. I doubt not that Alvarado and his troops have defended themselves like brave warriors; yet I cannot help fearing he has been forced to succumb to the overwhelming numbers of these dogs, for you see how I have fared with my division, and it may have gone worse with his."

Upon this Sandoval and Lugo threw themselves on horseback and galloped off for our encampment, where they arrived about the hour of vespers, but we had received intelligence of Cortes' defeat many hours beforehand. They still found us engaged with the Mexicans, who were doing their utmost to storm our camp from that side of the causeway where we had pulled down several houses, while, at the same time, they attacked us with their canoes from the side towards the lake.

They had driven one of our brigantines between the stakes, killed two of the men, and wounded all the rest.

When Sandoval saw how I and many of my comrades stood up to our middles in the water to get the brigantine clear of the stakes, he applauded our courage, and bid us do our utmost to save the vessel from falling into the hands of the enemy, as the Mexicans had already fastened many ropes to her, and were trying to tow her off into the town behind their canoes. Sandoval's encouraging words were not lost upon us, and we fought with such determination that at length we rescued the vessel. On this occasion I was wounded by an arrow.

While we were fighting for the possession of this brigantine, fresh bodies of the enemy kept continually crowding up the causeway. We received many more wounds, and even Sandoval was hit in the face by a stone at the moment Alvarado was coming up to his assistance with another small body of the cavalry; and when Sandoval saw how daringly I, with many of my comrades, opposed the enemy, he ordered us to retreat slowly, that all our horses might not be sacrificed. As we did not immediately obey his commands, he cried out to us, "Are we then all to perish for your sakes? For heaven's sake, my brave companions, make good your retreat!" These words were scarcely out of his mouth when both he and his horse were again wounded. We now ordered our Indian allies to move off the causeway, and we began to retreat slowly but with our faces always turned towards the enemy. Our musketeers and crossbow-men kept up a continued fire upon them; the cavalry at intervals charged the enemy's line at half speed, and Pedro Moreno thundered away with the cannon. But whatever number of the infuriated enemy we might mow down, it mattered not, they still continued to follow us, for they had made up their minds to overcome us that very night and sacrifice us to their idols.

After we had at last, with excessive toil, crossed a deep opening, and had arrived at our encampment, where we were pretty secure from the enemy's attacks, Sandoval, Lugo, Tapia, and Alvarado stood together relating what had befallen each of the respective divisions, when all in a moment the large drum of Huitzilopochtli again resounded from the summit of the temple, accompanied by all the hellish music of shell trumpets, horns, and other instruments. The sound was truly dismal and terrifying, but still more agonizing was all this to us when we looked up and beheld how the Mexicans were mercilessly sacrificing to their idols our unfortunate companions, who had been captured in Cortes' flight across the opening.

We could plainly see the platform, with the chapel in which those

cursed idols stood; how the Mexicans had adorned the heads of the Spaniards with feathers, and compelled their victims to dance round the god Huitzilopochtli; we saw how they stretched them out at full length on a large stone, ripped open their breasts with flint knives, tore out the palpitating heart, and offered it to their idols. Alas! we were forced to be spectators of all this, and how they then seized hold of the dead bodies by the legs and threw them headlong down the steps of the temple, at the bottom of which other executioners stood ready to receive them, who severed the arms, legs, and heads from the bodies, drew the skin off the faces, which were tanned with the beards still adhering to them, and produced as spectacles of mockery and derision at their feasts; the legs, arms, and other parts of the body being cut up and devoured!

In this way the Mexicans served all the Spaniards they took prisoners; and the entrails alone were thrown to the tigers, lions, otters, and serpents, which were kept in cages. These abominable barbarities we were forced to witness with our own eyes from our very camp; and the reader may easily imagine our feelings, how excessively agonizing! the more so as we were so near our unfortunate companions without being able to assist them. Every one of us thanked God from the bottom of his soul for His great mercy in having rescued us from such a horrible death!

While we were thus gazing upon this dismal scene, fresh troops of Mexicans came storming along in great numbers, and fell upon us from all sides with the fury of wild beasts; and continually cried, "Only look up to the temple! such will be the end of you all! This our gods have often promised us!" but the threats which they threw out against our Tlascallan friends were even more terrible. They threw among them the bones of the legs and arms of their countrymen and of ours which had been roasted and the flesh torn off, crying out at the same time, "We have already satiated ourselves with the flesh of your countrymen and of the teules; you may, therefore, as well enjoy what remains on these bones! Do you see the ruins of those houses there which you have pulled down? you will soon have to build us up much larger and finer ones. Only remain faithful to the teules, and we promise you you shall be with them when we sacrifice them to our gods!"

Quauhtemoctzin, after gaining this victory, forwarded the feet and hands of our unfortunate countrymen, with their beards and skins, as also the heads of the horses they had killed, to all our allies and his

own relations, accompanied by the assurance that more than half of the Spaniards had been killed, and that he would soon have the rest in his power. He therefore ordered those towns which had entered into our alliance immediately to send ambassadors to Mexico, otherwise he would march against them and put the whole of the inhabitants to death.

From this moment the enemy attacked us without intermission day and night; but as we were always upon our guard, and kept in a body together, we gave them no opportunity of taking us by surprise.

Our officers shared the hardships with the meanest soldiers, and the horses stood always ready saddled, one half on the causeway, the other at Tlacupa. Whenever we filled up any opening, the Mexicans were sure to return and open it again, and throw up more formidable entrenchments on the opposite side. Our allies of the towns which lay in the lake, who had up to this moment assisted us with their canoes, began to fall off after they had lost so many of their men and numbers of their canoes, and though they lent no aid to the Mexicans, yet they only awaited the final issue of the siege to forsake us altogether.

Sandoval, Tapia, Lugo, and the other officers who had arrived from the other divisions, now thought it high time to return to their own troops and inform Cortes as to how matters stood with us. They accordingly hastened back to our general's head-quarters, and told him how valiantly Alvarado and his men were defending themselves, and the great vigilance which was observed in his camp.

Sandoval, who was always a good friend to me, told Cortes on this occasion how he had found me, with several others, up to my middle in the water fighting away to rescue one of the brigantines; adding, that had it not been for us, she must undoubtedly have been lost with all the men on board. What he further added in my praise I will not mention, as it concerns my own person, but it was often repeated by others and sufficiently known to all the troops.

When Cortes learnt what excellent order we observed in our camp, his heart grew lighter, and he commanded the divisions to keep out of the way of the enemy as much as possible, and confine themselves to the defence of the respective encampments, on which the Mexicans renewed the attack every morning by throwing in darts, stones, and other missiles. But after we had strengthened our encampment by a deep and broad ditch we considered ourselves more secure, and remained quiet for the four following days. Cortes and Sandoval allowing their troops a like period of rest, and certainly we stood much in

need of it, for we were all wounded and quite enfeebled by continued fighting, and the little nourishment we received. On that terrible day the loss of the three divisions amounted to sixty men and seven horses. The short repose we enjoyed was most beneficial to us, but we had now to deliberate on our future plan of operation.

CHAPTER CLIII.

The new plan of operation which we adopt in the siege, and how all our allies return to their several homes.

For the next five days we stood at night under arms on the causeway, the brigantines lying on each side in the lake, while one half of our cavalry kept patrolling about Tlacupa, where our baggage and baking-house were; the other half being stationed near our camp. As soon as the day began to dawn, the Mexicans renewed the attack upon our encampment, which they were determined to take by storm.

Similar attacks were likewise made on the encampments of Sandoval and Cortes, until we changed our plan of operation. The Mexicans in the meantime made solemn sacrifices every day in the large temple on the Tlatelulco, and celebrated their feasts. Each time the infernal drum resounded from the temple, accompanied by the discordant noise of shell trumpets, timbrels, horns, and the horrible yells and howlings of the Mexicans. Large fires were kept up on the platform of the temple during the whole night, and each night a certain number of our unfortunate countrymen were sacrificed to their cursed idols, Huitzilopochtli and Tetzcatlipuca, who, in the discourses which the papas held with them, promised that we should all be killed in a few days. As these gods were lying and evil-minded beings, they deceived the Mexicans with these promises in order that they might not be induced to sue for peace with the teules. Unfortunately the Tlascallans and our other allies began to put faith in these oracles after our last defeat.

One morning large bodies of Mexicans again fell upon us with the intention of surrounding us on all sides. Each separate body of the Mexicans was distinguished by a particular dress and certain warlike devices, and regularly relieved each other in battle. In the midst of their fierce attacks they constantly cried out, "You are a set of low-minded scoundrels, you are fit for nothing, and you neither know how to build a house nor how to cultivate maize. You are a pack of

worthless fellows, and only come to plunder our town. You have fled away from your own country and deserted your own king; but before eight days are past there will not be one of you left alive. Oh! you miserable beings, you are so bad and beastly that even your very flesh is not eatable. It tastes as bitter as gall!"

It is most probable that after they had feasted off the bodies of several of our companions, the Almighty, in his mercy, had turned the flesh bitter. Against the Tlascallans they threw out more terrible language, threatening to turn them all into slaves, fatten some for their sacrifices, and reserve others for rebuilding their houses and tilling the ground.

All these abominable threats they uttered in the midst of fighting, and they came pouring forth over the ruins of the houses we had destroyed, or they fell upon us in the rear from their numerous canoes; but the Almighty each time gave us fresh vigour, so that we were able to make a good stand against the enemy and beat them back with considerable loss in killed and wounded.

About this time our allies of Huexotzinco, Cholulla, Tezcuco, and Tlascalla, had become wearied of the war, and secretly agreed with each other to return to their homes. Without mentioning a single word either to Cortes, Sandoval, or Alvarado, they all suddenly left our encampments, only a few of the most faithful remaining with us. In Cortes' division there remained a brother of the king of Tezcuco, the brave Suchel, (who was subsequently baptized with the name of Don Carlos,) with about forty of his relations and friends. In Sandoval's division a cazique of Huexotzinco, with about fifty men: and in our division the sons of our honest friend Don Lorenzo de Vargas, with the brave Chichimeclatecl, and about eighty men.

We were not a little dismayed to find that our allies had thus suddenly decamped, and when Cortes questioned those who remained as to the motives which had induced their countrymen to desert us, they replied, that their companions had at length began to fear the threats of the Mexicans and the oracles of their idols, that we should all be destroyed, particularly when they saw what numbers of our men were killed and wounded; besides their own great losses, which already amounted to above 1200 men. To all this was added the warnings of the younger Xicotencatl, whom Cortes had caused to be hung at Tezcuco, namely, that sooner or later we should all be put to death, as he had been assured by his soothsayers.

Our general was greatly alarmed at this desertion, but took care to hide his real feelings from those few of our allies who had remained

faithful, and merely remarked, with a placid smile on his countenance, that there was nothing to fear, and he was surprised that their countrymen did not see through the real design of the Mexicans in promulgating the false oracles of their gods. By this and other plausible speeches, added to vast promises, he strengthened them in their fidelity.

On one of these occasions the above-mentioned Suchel, who was a man of uncommon bravery, and a cazique in his own right, said to Cortes: "Malinche, you should not humble yourself each day to renew the conflict with the enemy. In my opinion you should rather command your officers to cruize round the town with the brigantines, in order to cut off all its supplies of water and provisions. In that city there are so many thousands of warriors that their store of provisions must soon become exhausted. The only supply of water they have is from the rain that falls, and what they obtain from wells recently dug, which cannot be wholesome to drink. What can they do if you cut off their supplies of provisions and water? for a war against hunger and thirst is the most direful of all calamities!"

When he had done speaking Cortes gave him a hearty embrace, thanked him for his good advice, and promised to bestow valuable townships upon him. To this he had been advised all along by many of us soldiers; but a Spanish soldier has too much spirit to reduce a town by famine; he is all impatience to fight his way in.

After Cortes had maturely considered this plan, he sent word by means of brigantines to Alvarado and Sandoval to desist from the daily attacks upon the town. This new method of conducting the siege was greatly favoured by the circumstance that our brigantines stood no longer in fear of the stakes which the enemy had driven into the lake, for if there was a stiffish breeze and the men vigorously plied their oars, the brigantines were sure each time to break through them. By this means we became complete masters of the lake, and all the detached buildings which stood in the water. When the Mexicans saw the great advantage we gained over them in this way they became considerably disheartened.

In the meantime we continued the combat on the causeways, and in the space of four days we had with great difficulty and labour filled up the wide opening in front of our camp. Two companies repelling the attacks of the enemy, while the third was occupied in filling up the aperture. Cortes did the same with his division, and himself assisted in dragging along beams and planks to make the causeway more safe. Sandoval was similarly engaged on his causeway, and now

the brigantines were able to lend us considerable assistance, since they no longer feared the stakes.

In this way we continually kept advancing nearer and nearer to the city, though the enemy constantly renewed their attacks upon us, and that with so much fury and intrepidity that it was often with difficulty we could repulse them. But the Almighty had strengthened our arms, and our crossbow-men and musketeers did great execution among the crowded ranks of the enemy; yet we had still every evening to retreat along the causeway to our encampment, which was not the easiest part of the day's work, as the enemy, still big with the recent victory they had gained over us, fought with great confidence. At one time they fell upon us from three sides, and wounded two horses, but thank heavens we cut our way through, slaughtered a considerable number of them and made many prisoners. On our side we had likewise several wounded, but this did not discourage us, we each day returned to the conflict, dressed our wounds at night with bandages steeped in warm oil, supped off vegetables, maize-cakes, and figs, and then posted our watches for the night.

The hellish rejoicings on the summit of the large temple were still kept up during the night. Really it is impossible to describe the dreadful and dismal sound of this diabolical drum, with the yelling and other dissonant noises which burst forth each time the Mexicans sacrificed one of our countrymen between the large fires they had kindled on the summit of the temple! For ten successive days were these inhuman sacrifices continued, until all their prisoners were gone; Christobal de Guzman, who was among the number, they had reserved for the last, and kept alive for eighteen days.

During these sacrifices the idols delivered their oracles, and promised the Mexicans our total destruction before ten days had expired, if they only persevered in their attacks upon us. And thus it was they allowed themselves to be deceived!

The following morning early the Mexicans again advanced in numerous bodies to the attack, and would undoubtedly have forced their way up to our encampment if we had not kept up a steady fire upon them with our cannon, which Pedro Mareno served with great effect. I must not forget to mention that they shot our own arrows at us from five crossbows which they had captured, the use of which they had compelled the Spaniards whom they had taken prisoners to teach them; but the injury they did us with these was next to nothing.

Matters went on in the same way at the two other encampments, with which we kept up a constant communication, by means of the bri-

gantines, which also conveyed Cortes' different commands, and these he always put down in writing.

While the three divisions were thus steadily carrying on their operations against the city, our brigantines were also continually on the alert, and two of those belonging to Cortes' division diligently chased the convoys of provisions and water going to Mexico. On one occasion they captured a large canoe quite filled with a species of slime,[24] which, when dried, tastes very much like cheese. The number of prisoners our vessels took was likewise very great.

Twelve or thirteen days may now have passed away since our unfortunate defeat; and as Suchel, the brother of the king of Tezcuco, became daily more convinced that we had the advantage over the Mexicans, and that their threats to destroy us all within ten days had been a mere trick of their idols to delude them, he sent word to his brother to despatch the whole armed force of Tezcuco to aid in the siege. The king of Tezcuco soon complied with his brother's wishes, and before two days had elapsed above 2000 of his warriors arrived in our camp. I still remember quite well that they were accompanied by Pedro Sanchez Farsan and Antonio de Villareal, who subsequently married the lady Ojeda. The first of these gentlemen, it will be remembered, Cortes had appointed commandant of Tezcuco, and the second chamberlain to the king of that place. Cortes was not a little rejoiced at the arrival of this considerable body of men, and did not forget to bestow his praises on them.

The Tlascallans followed the example of the Tezcucans, who shortly after returned in great numbers, under the command of Tecapaneca, cazique of Topoyanco. In the same way large bodies of men arrived from Huexotzinco, but very few came from Cholulla.

Cortes commanded all these Indian troops to repair to his headquarters, having previously taken the precaution to station detachments along the line of their march, to protect them against any attacks of the enemy.

When they had all arrived he stepped into the midst of them, and addressed them in Spanish, which was interpreted by Aguilar and Doña Marina. He assured them he had never doubted their being well and faithfully inclined towards him, from the time they had become subjects of our emperor, and experienced our bounty. When he invited them to join him in this campaign against Mexico, he had had no other object in view than that they might reap a real benefit by it, and return home laden with booty; and to give them an opportunity of revenging themselves on their old enemies, with whom they

had never been able to cope previous to our arrival in their country. Though they had fought bravely, and stoutly assisted us on every occasion, they should nevertheless bear in mind that each day we ordered their troops to draw off from the causeways, because they embarrassed our movements; and though our numbers had been so very scanty, yet we had never stood in need of their assistance; for we had told them over and over again that the Lord Jesus was our stronghold, from whom all victory comes. They were likewise convinced that we were able to level houses to the ground, and pull up the palisades, without their aid. For the rest, he was bound to make the observation to them that, according to the strict articles of war, they had deserved punishment of death, because they had deserted their general at a time when the battle was at its height. He would, however, pardon them, on account of their ignorance of our laws and articles of war; he must now likewise forbid them, under any pretence whatever, to kill any Mexicans that might be taken prisoners; for he was anxious to make himself master of the city, by pacifying its inhabitants.

After Cortes had done speaking, he embraced Chichimeclatecl, the two younger Xicotencatls, and Suchel of Tezcuco, bestowed great praise on their faithful adherence to our emperor, promising to reward them with a larger extent of territory than they already possessed, besides a gift of numerous slaves. He was equally kind towards the caziques of Topoyanco, Huexotzinco, and of Cholulla, and then distributed these Indian auxiliaries equally among the three divisions.

As our battles with the Mexicans continued day after day in the same manner, I will not go so much into particulars as heretofore. I have merely to add, that during these days it began to rain very fast every evening, and that the heavier the showers the more welcome they were to us; for as soon as the Mexicans were wet they desisted from their attacks, and did not molest us on our retreats at night. Neither must I omit to mention that towards the close of the ninety-three days in which we kept Mexico closely besieged, we upon one occasion fell with our divisions at the same moment into the town, and fought our way up to the wells, from which the Mexicans, as I have above mentioned, drew all their drinkable water. These wells we completely destroyed; but we certainly did not accomplish this without encountering a severe opposition from the enemy, who directed their long lances more particularly against our cavalry, which here galloped up and down on the level dry ground in fine style.

CHAPTER CLIV.

How Cortes offers terms of peace to Quauhtemoctzin.

After we had by degrees gained so many advantages over the Mexicans, taken most of the bridges, causeways, and entrenchments, and levelled so many houses to the ground, Cortes determined to despatch three distinguished Mexicans, whom we had taken prisoners, to Quauhtemoctzin, to offer him terms of peace. At first the three men refused to accept of this commission, assuring our general that Quauhtemoctzin would put them to death if they came with such a message. But at length, by fair words and promises, added to some valuable presents, he persuaded them into compliance. He then desired them to take the following message to their monarch: "He (Cortes) felt a great affection for Quauhtemoctzin, as he was so near a relative, and son-in-law to his late friend, the powerful Motecusuma. He should indeed feel sorely grieved if he compelled him to destroy the great city of Mexico. He was also grieved to see so many of its inhabitants, with his subjects of the surrounding country, daily becoming victims to these continued battles. He now therefore, in the name of our emperor, offered him terms of peace, with forgiveness for all the injury he had done us. He advised him to take this offer, which had now been made four several times to him, into his serious consideration, and no longer allow himself to be deceived by the inexperience of youth, and the bad advice of his evil-minded papas and cursed idols. He ought to reflect on the vast number of men he had already lost; that we were in possession of all the cities and towns of the surrounding neighbourhood; that the number of his enemies daily increased; and that, at least, he should have some compassion for his subjects. He (Cortes) was also well aware that provisions began to fail in Mexico, and that the inhabitants had no means of obtaining water."

By means of our interpreters these three distinguished personages perfectly comprehended what Cortes said to them, yet they begged of him to give them some written document which they might present to Quauhtemoctzin, for they well knew we were accustomed to accompany every message of this nature with a letter, or amatl, as they termed any written order.

When these three personages arrived in the presence of Quauhtemoctzin they fulfilled their commission with many tears and sighs. The Mexican monarch on this occasion was surrounded by his chief officers, and at

first appeared inclined to be angry with those who thus presumed to come with such a message. But as he was a young man of a kind and affable disposition,[25] he assembled all his great officers, and the most distinguished of his papas, and told them that he felt inclined to put an end to the war with Malinche and his troops. The Mexicans, he continued, had already tried every mode of attack, and put every species of defence into practice, and had continually altered their plans of operation; yet, when they thought the Spaniards vanquished, they each time returned with renewed vigour. They were aware that a considerable body of auxiliaries had recently joined their enemies; that every town had declared against Mexico; the brigantines no longer feared the stakes they had driven into the lake; the cavalry galloped without fear through their streets, and they were threatened with the most terrible of calamities, want of provisions and water. He now therefore demanded the opinion of each person present, but more particularly of the papas, who were acquainted with the wishes of their gods. He desired every one fearlessly to speak his mind, and state his views of the matter.

Upon this, it is said, they declared themselves to the following effect: "Great and mighty monarch! You are our lord and master, and the sceptre you sway is in good hands. On every occasion you have shown great penetration and power of mind, and you have deserved a crown, even had it not been yours by inheritance. Peace is certainly an excellent thing, but you must remember that, from the moment these teules set foot in this country and in Mexico, our condition has daily grown worse. Remember the many presents your uncle the late powerful Motecusuma bestowed upon these teules, and the important services he rendered them, and what treatment he received in return! Reflect on the fate of Cacamatzin, the king of Tezcuco; and your uncle, how did he end his days? What has become of your relatives the kings of Iztapalapan, Cojohuacan, Tlacupa, and of Talatzinco? Have not even the very sons of the great Motecusuma perished? All the gold and wealth of this great city has vanished. Great numbers of the inhabitants of Tepeaca, of Chalco, and even of Tezcuco, have been led away into slavery, and have been marked in the face with a red-hot iron! Remember, therefore, above all things, what our gods have promised you. Listen to their advice, and put no trust in Malinche and his fine words. It is better to be buried sword in hand under the ruins of this city than to submit to the power of those who wish to turn us into slaves, and have prepared every species of torture for us."

This speech the papas accompanied with the assurance that the gods,

a few nights ago, while they were sacrificing to them, had promised the Mexicans victory.

"If," answered Quauhtemoctzin, rather sorrowfully, "these are your wishes, let them be done! Make the most of the maise and other provisions we have still left, and let us all die sword in hand! Let no man presume, from this moment, to mention the word peace in my presence! He who dares so to do I will put to death with my own hand."

Every one present then swore that they would exert themselves unceasingly day and night, and sacrifice their lives in the defence of the metropolis. They likewise found means to provide for their most pressing wants by making arrangements with the inhabitants of Xochimilco and other townships to provide them with water; and in Mexico itself new wells were dug, from which, contrary to all expectations, they obtained drinkable water. All hostilities had now been staid for two days in expectation of an answer from Quauhtemoctzin; when all of a sudden our three camps were attacked by immense bodies of the enemy with lion-like fierceness, and with such confidence as though they were sure of victory. During this attack, Quauhtemoctzin's horn was sounded, and it was with great difficulty we prevented the enemy from disordering our ranks; for the Mexicans now ran right upon our swords and lances, so that we were obliged to fight them foot to foot.

We certainly each time remained master of the field, and at length got more accustomed to these attacks; yet many of us were continually wounded. In this way the infuriated enemy fell upon us at different points for six or seven days consecutively, and great was the slaughter we made among their ranks; but we could not give them a complete overthrow.

One time the Mexicans cried out, "What does Malinche mean by his repeated offers of peace? Does he imagine we are so foolish as to listen to him? Our gods have promised us victory, and we have abundance of provisions and water. Not one of you will escape alive from here; therefore speak no more to us about terms of peace. Such things belong to women; arms were made for man!"

With these words they fell upon us with the fury of mad dogs, and the combat lasted until the darkness of night put an end to it. We then as usual marched back to our encampment, having first ordered our Indian auxiliaries from the causeway. We then posted our watches for the night, and ate the little supper we could get under arms, after having fought from the first dawn of day to the fall of night.

In this way the siege continued many days, until three townships in alliance with Mexico, named Matlaltzinco and Malinalco, the third I have forgotten, which lay about thirty-two miles from Mexico, agreed to fall upon our rear with their united forces, while the Mexicans, at the same moment, were to attack us from the city. In this way they thought they could not fail to destroy the whole of us; but we shall soon see how this scheme terminated.

CHAPTER CLV.

How Gonzalo de Sandoval marches against the provinces which had sent their troops to cooperate with Quauhtemoctzin.

In order that these events may be rendered more intelligible, I must recur to the defeat which Cortes' division sustained on the causeway, when sixty of his men, or rather sixty-two, as subsequently appeared, were taken prisoners. The reader will remember that Quauhtemoctzin, after that unfortunate day, sent the feet and hands, with the skins torn from the faces of the murdered Spaniards, and the heads of the dead horses to Matlaltzinco, Malinalco, and other townships. This he did to blazon forth the victory he had gained over us; and he summoned the inhabitants to cooperate with him, and carry on the war with us day and night without intermission, and on a certain day to fall upon our rear, while he with his troops sallied out upon us from the city; in that way, he assured them, they could not fail to give us a total overthrow, as above half of our men had been killed in the last battle. This message from Quauhtemoctzin met with the more favorable reception in Matlaltzinco, as the monarch had many relations on his mother's side in this township. It was therefore resolved that the whole armed force of the country should be called out, and march to the relief of Mexico.

The warriors of these three townships accordingly put themselves in motion, and commenced hostilities by plundering and ill-using the inhabitants of the districts they passed through, and carrying off their children to sacrifice them to their idols. The inhabitants of these places, therefore, applied to Cortes, who instantly despatched Andreas de Tapia, with twenty horse, one hundred Spanish foot, and a strong body of our allies to their assistance. Tapia soon dispersed the enemy, with considerable loss, and they fled precipitately to their own country.

Cortes was excessively pleased with the promptness that Tapia had

displayed, who, however, had scarcely returned to head-quarters, when messengers arrived from Quauhnahuac, praying for immediate assistance against these same tribes of Matlaltzinco and Malinalco, who had fallen hostilely into their country.

Cortes, on receiving this intelligence, instantly ordered off Sandoval with twenty cavalry, eighty of his most nimble foot soldiers, and a considerable body of allies to their assistance. God only knows how perilous the situation of the three divisions became by the expedition against these warlike tribes, as most of our troops were suffering from severe wounds and lacked all manner of refreshments! Much indeed might be said in praise of the victories which Sandoval gained over the enemy, but I will not detain my reader with them, but merely state that he speedily returned to his division. He brought in prisoners with him, two of the most distinguished personages of Matlaltzinco, and restored peace to the country. We certainly derived great advantages from this expedition; our allies were protected from any further attacks, a new and dangerous foe was put down, and it proved to Quauhtemoctzin that the power of his allies in the provinces was very feeble; for the Mexicans had triumphantly cried out to us in the last battles, that the warriors of Matlaltzinco, and of other provinces, would march against us; and then, as their gods had promised them, we should all be destroyed.

After the successful termination of this expedition Cortes again offered terms of peace to Quauhtemoctzin, in the same way as on the former occasion, and told him that the emperor, our master, again offered him terms of peace, that the city might not be totally destroyed, which was the only reason we had staid hostilities for the last five days. He ought to reflect that he had scarcely any provisions and water left for his troops and the unfortunate inhabitants, and that two thirds of the city lay in ruins. He might convince himself by questioning the two chiefs of Matlaltzinco, whom he expressly sent to him on this occasion, what he had to expect from their country in the shape of assistance. To this message, which Cortes accompanied by offers of sincere friendship, Quauhtemoctzin would not deign an answer, but ordered the two chiefs of Matlaltzinco to leave the city and return to their homes. Immediately after this our three divisions were, if possible, attacked with greater fury than on any previous occasion; and whatever numbers of these infuriated beings we might kill, they were not to be deterred, and it seemed as if they only sought death. Under the cry of, "Tenitoz rey Castilla? Tenitoz Axaca?" which in their language means: What will the king of Spain say to

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this? What will he now say? They showered forth upon us volumes of lances, arrows, and stones, so that the whole causeway was completely covered with them. However courageously the Mexicans might defend themselves, we nevertheless each day made new inroads upon the city. Their numbers had greatly decreased, nor did they make any fresh openings in the causeway; though they never failed to harass us every evening when we marched back to our encampment.

By this time there was not a grain of powder left among the three divisions, when fortunately a vessel ran into Vera Cruz which had become separated from an armament that had been fitted out by a certain licentiate, named Lucas Vasquez de Aillon, but which had been shipwrecked on the islands off Florida. This vessel had on board a number of soldiers, with a good store of powder, crossbows and other matters, of which we stood in need. All this was immediately forwarded to us by Rodrigo Rangel, who kept Narvaez in close custody at Vera Cruz.

Cortes now carried on the siege with more determination, and issued orders for the three divisions to advance as far as possible into the city, and even to make an attempt to force the Tlatelulco, on which stood the chief temples of Mexico.

Cortes, with his division, soon fought his way up to another square where some smaller temples stood, in which were suspended from beams the heads of several of my companions in arms who had been slain in the different engagements. The hair of these heads and beards was much longer than when on the living body, and I certainly should not have believed this if I had not seen it with my own eyes three days after, when our division had likewise advanced up to this spot. Among these heads I recognized those of three of my companions in arms. At this melancholy sight the tears rolled from our eyes, and we allowed these sorrowful remains of our fellow-countrymen to hang there for the present, until twelve days after, when we took them down with others we found elsewhere in these temples, and buried them in a church we founded, which is now called the Church of the Martyrs. Alvarado, with his division, had fought his way up to the Tlatelulco, but found so formidable a body of Mexican troops stationed there for the defence of the temples and idols, that it took him a couple of hours' hard fighting before he had entire possession of it. Here our cavalry was of the greatest assistance to us, as they were less restricted in their movements on this open space, and charged the crowded ranks of the enemy with much success.

As the enemy attacked us in great numbers from three different

points, our three companies also fought in detached bodies, and one of these, commanded by Guiterrez de Badajoz, was ordered by Alvarado to make an attempt on the great temple of Huitzilopochtli. This company fought most valiantly with the enemy, and particularly with the priests, who lived in great numbers in houses near the temple, and our men were beaten back down the steps of this building again, up which they had advanced to a considerable distance. Alvarado seeing this, now also commanded the two other companies who were fighting away in another direction to assist the other in storming the temple. The body of the enemy's forces we thus suddenly quitted, instantly followed us, yet this did not deter us from ascending the steps of the temple. By heavens! it was a most terrific piece of labour to take this elevated and strongly-fortified building, and much might be said in praise of our courage for attempting it. We were all dreadfully wounded, yet we were determined to gain the summit to plant our standard there, and set fire to the idols. When we had accomplished this, we had still to fight about with the Mexicans at the foot of the temple until night came on; for owing to their immense numbers it was impossible to give them an entire defeat.

While we were accomplishing this splendid deed of arms on the temple of Huitzilopochtli, Cortes was hotly engaged with the enemy in another quarter of the town, at a great distance from us. When he saw the flames issuing on a sudden from the summit of the chief temple, and our standard waving there, he expressed his joy aloud, and all his troops would gladly have been with us at that moment. But they found too many difficulties to surmount, as the distance between us was a good mile, and a number of bridges and canals intervening, all of which they must have forced. Besides this they everywhere met with so determined an opposition that it was quite impossible for them to fight their way into the heart of the city. It was not till four days after, when the three divisions had cleared the streets of the enemy and could meet together without any further obstacle, that they likewise advanced up to this temple, and Quauhtemoctzin found himself obliged to retire with the whole of his forces into a part of the city which lay in the midst of the lake, after we had levelled all his palaces to the ground. But even from this quarter the Mexicans continued their attacks upon us, and when we commenced our retreat towards nightfall they followed us with greater fierceness than on former occasions.

Cortes, finding that day after day passed away without the Mexicans seeming any way inclined to sue for peace, determined to try if he

could not gain some decisive victory over them by suddenly falling upon them from an ambush. For this purpose he selected thirty horse and one hundred of the most active foot soldiers from the three divisions; these troops were ordered to conceal themselves with 3000 Tlascallans very early one morning in some extensive buildings which belonged to one of the Mexican grandees. Cortes then marched as usual with the remaining troops along the causeway into the city, the cavalry clearing the streets in advance, followed by the musketeers and crossbowmen. When he had arrived at a bridge which lay across a broad canal, and was defended by a vast body of the enemy, he ordered his men to make a sudden retreat, and our allies to move off the causeway. The Mexicans, who imagined Cortes was retreating from fear, fell upon his rear with great impetuosity; but as soon as he saw the enemy had passed the houses in which we lay concealed, he fired a cannon, which was the signal previously agreed upon; and we rushed forth from our ambush with the cavalry at our head, and fell in our turn upon the enemy's rear. Cortes then faced about with his men and our Tlascallan friends, and attacked the enemy in front. A terrible slaughter now ensued in the ranks of the Mexicans, and they never after showed any inclination to molest us when we marched back to our encampments in the evening.

Alvarado, with his division, had in a similar manner attempted to entrap the enemy by an ambush, but he was not equally successful.

As for myself I was not with my division on this occasion, Cortes having purposely selected me to join his troops in the ambush above-mentioned.

We had now entire possession of the Tlatelulco, and Cortes ordered our three companies to fortify themselves on this large square, to save the men the trouble of marching thither every morning from the encampment which was two miles off. Here we lay quietly for three days without doing anything worthy of notice, and Cortes, in the hopes that the Mexicans would now certainly sue for peace, would not allow any more houses to be pulled down, nor any further attacks to be made on the other parts of the city. He then forwarded another message to the Mexican monarch, in which he desired him to surrender, and assured him he would have nothing to fear for his own person; on the contrary, he would meet with the most honorable treatment, and that he should continue in possession of his dominions and cities as heretofore. This message our general accompanied by a supply of provisions, consisting in maise-cakes, fowls, venison, figs, and cherries, as he knew the monarch had scarcely any food left.

Quauhtemoctzin, on receiving this message, called a council of war composed of his chief officers, in which it was agreed that the monarch should return this answer to Cortes: "He, Quauhtemoctzin, was now very desirous of putting an end to the war, and wished to have a personal interview with Cortes in the space of three days, to settle the terms of peace."

Four distinguished Mexicans accordingly arrived in our camp with an answer to that effect. We really now thought Quauhtemoctzin earnestly desired peace, and for this reason Cortes sumptuously regaled these four ambassadors, and presented them on leaving with a further supply of provisions for their monarch, who returned this civility by sending other ambassadors with a present of two splendid mantles for our general, with the assurance that he would meet Cortes according to his promise.

But this message which Quauhtemoctzin had sent was a mere blind to gain time in order to repair the bridges and deepen the canals, and get in a fresh supply of arms; and, to be short, the three days expired, but no Quauhtemoctzin made his appearance. His courtiers continually cautioned him not to put any trust in Cortes, and supported their arguments by reminding him of his uncle Motecusuma's miserable end; they assured him that Cortes would exterminate the whole of the Mexican nobility, and they advised him to excuse himself for not meeting Cortes, under the pretence of ill health. They faithfully promised him to march out to a man against the teules, and they despaired not of gaining a decisive victory over us some day or other, for this had been promised them by their gods.

When the three days had passed by and Quauhtemoctzin did not make his appearance, we concluded that we had been imposed upon by the Mexicans, who, however, did not leave us much time to vex ourselves about it, for all of a sudden they renewed the attack upon us with their accustomed fierceness, so that we were scarcely able to maintain our ground. The same befell the divisions of Alvarado and Sandoval, and it was as if the war had only just commenced.

As we had become rather careless from the certain expectation that peace was going to be concluded, the enemy found us not quite so well prepared, and wounded several of our men, one of whom died shortly after. We likewise lost two horses, and many others were wounded; but we did not leave them much room to brag of this sally, and made them pay dearly for it, as Cortes now ordered us to penetrate into that part of the town where Quauhtemoctzin had himself retreated; who, when he perceived that he was upon the point

of losing this last quarter of the city, sent messengers to propose a parley between himself and Cortes on the banks of a large canal, in such a manner that he was to stand on one side of the canal and our general on the other. Cortes accepted of this proposal and the following day was fixed for the interview. Our general repaired to the spot which had been fixed upon at the proper hour, but no Quauhtemoctzin came; however, he sent in his stead several distinguished personages, who offered as an excuse for their monarch's not coming, that he feared we should kill him with our crossbows and muskets. Cortes assured them upon his oath that no injury should befall their monarch; but all to no purpose, they were not to be persuaded.

During this discourse two of these Mexican grandees drew forth from a small package they had with them some maise-cakes, a piece of broiled fowl, and a few cherries, and began to eat, all which was only done that Cortes might not think they were in want of provisions. Our general then sent back word to Quauhtemoctzin by these messengers, that he was now quite indifferent whether he came or not; he would himself soon come and pay him a visit in his own house, and see all his stores of provisions.

For the five following days both armies remained perfectly quiet; but during this interval a great number of poor people who were starving for want of food deserted to our divisions, which was the principal reason why Cortes ordered all hostilities to be staid, as he still lived in expectation that the enemy would sue for peace. But we were again disappointed in our hopes.

There happened to be in Cortes' division a soldier named Sotelo, who had served in Italy under the great captain,[26] and who had fought at Garayana,[27] and in other famous battles. This man was always talking about the different battering engines which had been used in that war, and said, he would himself engage to construct a species of catapult on the Tlatelulco, and batter down the houses in which the enemy still held out, and this so effectually that the Mexicans would soon find themselves obliged to sue for peace.

Cortes allowed himself to be persuaded by the great things which this man promised, and issued the necessary orders for the construction of such a machine; and the stone, wood, lime, and iron, which this man required for his wonderful machine were soon provided for him. Two of these catapults were soon finished, by which large stones, of the size of buckets, were to be cast upon the houses. But these machines proved a complete failure, and the stones which they were to throw to a distance fell at the foot of the engine itself.

Cortes was excessively annoyed with this soldier for having persuaded him to listen to his schemes, and ordered the machines to be destroyed. Cortes then determined that an attack should be made with the brigantines on that quarter of the town where Quauhtemoctzin had retreated. The manner in which this was done I will relate in the following chapter.

CHAPTER CLVI.

How Quauhtemoctzin was taken prisoner.

Cortes finding the catapult of no manner of use, and that the Mexicans still refused to sue for peace, ordered Sandoval to penetrate with our twelve brigantines into that quarter of the city where Quauhtemoctzin had retreated with the flower of his army and the principal personages of Mexico. He at the same time gave orders to the men not to kill nor wound any Mexican, if it were at all possible to avoid it, and that they should not be the first to attack, but to level the houses to the ground, and destroy the numerous breastworks that had been constructed on the lake.

Cortes then mounted to the summit of the chief temple on the Tlatelulco, in order from thence to view Sandoval's manœuvres, and was accompanied by Alvarado, Luis Marin, Lugo, and other soldiers.

When Sandoval appeared with the brigantines in the quarter where Quauhtemoctzin's palace stood, the latter soon saw it would be impossible to hold out much longer, and he began to think of making his escape, lest he should be put to death, or taken prisoner. He had for some time past ordered that fifty large pirogues should always be ready at hand, with which, when the danger was at its height, he intended to escape to a part of the lake, which was thickly covered with reeds, and from there to reach the mainland, and seek refuge in some township which was friendly with the Mexicans. The same course he had also advised his chief officers and grandees to adopt. Accordingly, as soon as the principal inhabitants found Sandoval was penetrating into their very houses with his troops, they began to carry off all the property they could take with them in their canoes, and took to flight; so that the lake was instantly covered with numbers of canoes. When Sandoval was informed that Quauhtemoctzin, with the chief personages of Mexico, had likewise fled, he immediately staid the work of destruction in which his men were occupied, and ordered the brigantines to

the pursuit of the canoes, and particularly to look out for the pirogue which conveyed the monarch himself. If they succeeded in taking him alive, they were not to ill use him, but to show him every courtesy, and to secure his person in the most respectful manner possible.

Garcia Holguin, who was an intimate friend of Sandoval, commanded the swiftest brigantine, and had the best rowers. Sandoval, therefore selected Holguin's vessel, and pointed out to him the direction in which Quauhtemoctzin and his grandees were said to have steered with the large pirogues. Holguin now flew in pursuit, and it pleased God that he should overtake the canoes, and the fleet of large pirogues which conveyed Quauhtemoctzin and the grandees of Mexico. He soon recognized the one in which Quauhtemoctzin was himself, by the beautifully carved work with which it was ornamented, by the tent, and other decorations. Holguin now made a sign for the pirogues to stop, and as they did not instantly comply, he ordered his men to level their crossbows and muskets at them. When Quauhtemoctzin observed this, he began to fear, and he cried out, "Forbid your men to shoot at me. I am the king of Mexico, and of this country. I only beg of you not to touch my wife, my children, these females, or anything else I have with me here, but take me alone to Malinche."

Holguin was greatly rejoiced when he heard these words, and on coming up to the pirogue he embraced the monarch, and assisted him most courteously into his brigantine, with his wife and twenty of his grandees. Soft mats and cloaks were then spread out on the poop of the vessel for seats, and what food there was on board set before them. The canoes in which the baggage was laden were not touched, but ordered to follow the brigantine.

Sandoval had stationed himself at a spot whence he could watch the movements of the other brigantines, and give signals to them. When he was informed that Garcia Holguin had taken Quauhtemoctzin prisoner, and that he was already on his way with the monarch to Cortes, he ordered his men to pull with all their might to overtake Holguin, and cried out to him, when he was come near enough, to deliver up his prisoner to him. This Holguin refused to comply with, saying that *he*, and not Sandoval, had taken the monarch prisoner; to which the latter replied, that that had nothing to do with it, as he was commander-in-chief of the brigantines, and he (Holguin) stood under his commands, and had acted upon his orders; that he had purposely selected him for this purpose, because he was his particular friend, and his brigantine the fastest sailer.

While Sandoval and Holguin were thus disputing, another brigan-

tine hastened off to Cortes, (who was still standing on the summit of the temple, watching Sandoval's movements), in order to obtain the reward for bringing the first news of the monarch's capture. They at the same time informed him of the dispute between Sandoval and Holguin as to whom the honour was due of taking him prisoner.

On this news our general instantly despatched Luis Marin and Lugo to settle the dispute, by telling Sandoval and Holguin that they were jointly to bring in the monarch, his wife and family, captives, when he himself would decide whose prisoner the monarch was, and to whom the honour was due.

Our general in the meantime ordered some elevated seats to be erected, and covered with soft cushions and mantles, and a good repast to be prepared. Holguin and Sandoval soon after arrived with the monarch, and conducted him into the presence of Cortes, who received him with the utmost respect, and embraced him affectionately, at the same time expressing the kindest feelings towards him and his officers. Quauhtemoctzin then said to Cortes, "Malinche! I have done what I was bound to do in the defence of my metropolis, and of my subjects. My resources have now become entirely exhausted. I have succumbed to superior power, and stand a prisoner before you. Now draw the dagger which hangs at your belt, and plunge it into my bosom."

These words the monarch uttered under a flood of tears, and with heavy sighs, while several of his officers broke out into loud lamentations. Cortes assured him, by means of our interpreters, in the most kind manner, that he esteemed him the more for his bravery, his powerful and courageous defence of his city, and that, far from making him any reproaches on that head, it redounded more to his honour than to his shame. He certainly could have wished that he had accepted his offers of peace, to save the city from destruction, and the lives of so many of his subjects that had been sacrificed in battle; as, however, it had been impossible to avoid all this, and it could not now be remedied, he ought no longer to grieve, but compose his mind, and strive to raise the desponding spirits of his officers; assuring him he should remain, as heretofore, lord of Mexico, and of the other provinces attached to it.

Quauhtemoctzin and his officers thanked Cortes for this promise; upon which the latter inquired after his wife and the other women, who, he had been given to understand, had likewise accompanied him in the brigantine. Quauhtemoctzin said that he had himself begged of Sandoval and Holguin to leave them behind in the canoes until

Malinche's pleasure should be known. Our general then sent for them, and regaled them with the best of everything he had at hand. As it was now getting late, and beginning to rain, he commissioned Sandoval to convey the monarch, with his family and suite, to Cojohuacan; Alvarado and Oli at the same time being ordered off to their respective stations, and Cortes himself returned to his head-quarters at Tepeaquilla.

Quauhtemoctzin was taken prisoner on St. Hippolytus' day, the 13th August, 1521, about the hour of vespers. Praise and glory be to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to his blessed mother, the Virgin Mary. Amen.

During the night of this day it thundered and lightened without intermission, and about midnight with terrific vehemence.

Subsequent to Quauhtemoctzin's capture we soldiers had become so very deaf that we could scarcely hear anything, and we felt a similar sensation to what a person experiences when standing in a belfry and all the bells are ringing at once, and then cease all of a sudden. The reader will certainly not think this an ill-timed comparison if he only considers how our ears were constantly assailed during the ninety-three days which the siege of Mexico lasted, both night and day, with all manner of noises. In one quarter rose the deafening yells, piping, and war-whoop of the enemy; here some were calling out to the canoes to attack the brigantines, the bridges, and the causeways; there the Mexicans drove their troops together with loud yells to cut through the dykes, deepen the openings, drive in palisades, throw up entrenchments, while others cried out for more lances and arrows; in another place the Mexicans shouted to the women to bring more stones for the slings; between all which was heard the dismal din of the hellish music of drums, shell trumpets, and particularly the horrible and mournful sound of the huge drum of Huitzilopochtli; and this infernal instrument, whose melancholy tone pierced to the very soul, never ceased a moment. Day and night did all this din and noise continue without intermission; no one could hear what another said; and so my comparison of the belfry is the most suitable I can imagine.

I will now add a few words about Quauhtemoctzin's outward appearance. This monarch was between twenty-three and twenty-four years of age, and could in all truth be termed a handsome man, both as regards his countenance and his figure. His face was rather of an elongated form, with a cheerful look; his eye had great expression, both when he assumed an air of majesty or when he looked pleasantly around him; the colour of his face inclined more to white than to the copper-brown tint of the Indians in general. His wife was a niece of his uncle Motecusuma.; she was a young and very beautiful woman.

With regard to the dispute between Sandoval and Holguin as to which could claim the honour of Quauhtemoctzin's capture, Cortes settled it for the present by observing, that a similar dispute once happened among the Romans between Marius and Lucius Cornelius Sylla, when the latter took king Jugurtha prisoner, who had fled for safety to the house of his father-in-law Bocchus. "When Sylla," said Cortes, "made his triumphal entry into Rome, he led Jugurtha by a chain, among his trophies of victory. This Marius considered Sylla had no right to do without asking his permission, he (Marius) being commander-in-chief, and Sylla having merely acted upon his orders; but as Sylla belonged to the order of the patricians, these declared in his favour, they being opposed to Marius, as a stranger of Arpinum, and a man who had risen from the lowest ranks, though he had been seven times consul. From this circumstance arose those civil wars between Marius and Sylla; but the question as to whom the honour of Jugurtha's capture was due was never decided."

After relating this circumstance, Cortes added, that he would lay the matter before the emperor for his imperial decision as to who could claim some memento of the monarch's capture in his armorial bearings. They would therefore have to await a decision on this point from Spain. This, indeed, arrived after the lapse of two years, by which Cortes was permitted to place a series of kings in his escutcheon; as, for instance, Motecusuma and Quauhtemoctzin, kings of Mexico, Cacamatzin of Tezcuco, the kings of Iztapalapan, Cojohuacan, and Tlacupa, and another powerful king, who was a relative of Motecusuma, and lord of Matlaltzinco and of other provinces, and was said to have the best claim to the throne of Mexico. I must now say something of the dead bodies and skulls which we saw in that quarter of the town where Quauhtemoctzin had retreated. It is a real fact, and I can take my oath on it, that the houses and the canals were completely filled with them, a sight which I am unable to describe; and we were scarcely able to move along the streets, and through the courtyards of the Tlatelulco, on account of the number of dead bodies. I have certainly read of the destruction of Jerusalem, but should not like to decide whether the carnage was equally great there as it was here; but this I know, that most of the troops, as well of the town itself as those from the townships and provinces which stood under the dominion of Mexico, were most of them slain; that bodies lay strewed everywhere, and the stench was intolerable; which was the reason why, after the capture of Quauhtemoctzin, the three divisions drew off to their former stations. Cortes himself became indisposed that day, from the horrible stench.

Our troops in the brigantines had now a great advantage over us in making booty, for they were able to get at all the houses that lay in the lake, in which the Mexicans had concealed all their wealth; and also to those places in the lake which were thickly grown with reeds, and whither those Mexicans, whose houses were pulled down during the siege, fled with all their property; besides which, they had had frequent opportunities, while foraging in the country, to plunder several distinguished Mexicans, who had fled to seek refuge among the Otomies. We other soldiers, who fought away on the causeways and mainland, derived no such benefits; all we got were severe wounds from arrows, stones, and lances. Whenever we did penetrate into the houses, the inmates had already escaped with their valuables; for we were unable to get at the houses without first filling up a canal, or throwing a bridge across, which took up a considerable time: and this was my reason for observing in a former chapter, that the troops whom Cortes selected for the service of the brigantines fared better than those who were stationed on the mainland. There was not the slightest doubt about this; for when Cortes asked Quauhtemoctzin after Motecusuma's treasure, he and his generals declared that the greater part of it had been carried off by the crews of the brigantines.

As the atmosphere of the town had become perfectly pestiferous, from the decomposed bodies, Quauhtemoctzin requested Cortes to allow the whole of the inhabitants, with the remaining part of his troops, to leave the city. This our general readily granted, and the causeways were crowded for three days and nights with men, women, and children, on their way to the mainland. These poor beings were quite emaciated, and had a death-like appearance; their bodies covered with filth, and they spread around them so abominable a stench, that we grew miserable at the very sight.

As soon as all the inhabitants had left the city, Cortes sent some persons there to see how things looked in general. The houses were found crammed with dead bodies, and among them several poor people were found still alive, though too weak to stand, and lying in their own filth, like those hogs which are fed upon nothing but grass. Every spot of earth in the town looked as if it had been ploughed up, for the famished inhabitants had dug up every root out of the ground, and had even peeled the bark from the trees, to still their hunger; neither did we find any fresh water, for that in the wells was of a salty flavour; and yet during this horrible famine the Mexicans had not eaten the flesh of their countrymen, though they so greedily devoured that of the Tlascallans and Spaniards.[28] Certainly no people ever suffered so much in this

world from hunger, thirst, and the horrors of war, as the inhabitants of this great city.

After we had thus subdued the great, the populous, and the celebrated city of Mexico, a solemn service was performed, to offer up our thanks to the Almighty. After this Cortes ordered a banquet to be prepared in Cojohuacan, to celebrate the conquest with a joyous feast, at which the wine which had come with a vessel recently run into Vera Cruz, and the hog's meat from Cuba, were not spared.

To this banquet all the officers and soldiers were invited; but when the guests arrived there was scarcely sufficient room at the table for one third of them, which occasioned a good deal of ill-will, and it would have been better if Cortes had never given the banquet at all; for many curious things happened on this occasion, and Noah's tree gave rise to many foolish pranks. There were some folks who, when they had eaten and drank too much, instead of leaving the table, sicked all over it; others declared that they possessed gold enough to buy themselves horses with saddles of gold; and the crossbow-men swore they would for the future not shoot another arrow unless its point was made of pure gold; some kept stumbling about, and many rolled headlong down the steps.

After the banquet we had a ball, in which the ladies joined who had accompanied our army; and nothing could be more ridiculous than to see the leaps which their gallants took who were accoutred in full armour. The ladies who danced were only few in number, and I will not mention their names, nor should I like to repeat the satires which appeared at their expense on the following day; but I must not forget to mention that father Olmedo expressed his disapprobation aloud at the scandalous conduct of the men during this banquet and dance, and observed to Sandoval, that this was not the way to return thanks to God, or to obtain his assistance for the future!

Sandoval mentioned this to Cortes, who, as he was always discreet in what he did, instantly sent for this pious man, and said to him: "Excellent father! it is impossible to restrain the soldiers when they are enjoying themselves after their manner. I certainly should have done better if I had withheld this inducement from them. It is, however, in the power of your reverence to put a stop to all this, by ordering a solemn procession to the church, where, in a sermon, you can give us a severe reprimand from the pulpit. Then you will also have a good opportunity of commanding the men not to rob the Indians of their daughters, or of anything else, and in future to discontinue their fre-

quent disputes among each other, and to comport themselves as good Catholic Christians, that the Lord may prosper their lives."

This proposal was highly approved of by father Olmedo, and he thanked Cortes for it; though the idea had, in fact, originated with Alvarado. A procession was therefore instantly ordered, which we joined with flying colours and a few crosses, the image of the Virgin Mary being carried in front, and we sang supplicatory hymns as we moved along.

The day following father Olmedo preached a sermon, and many soldiers, with Cortes and Alvarado, made the communion, and we again offered up our thanks to the Almighty for the victory.

There are several circumstances relating to this memorable siege which I have omitted to mention, which, though they may appear out of place here, I should feel loth to pass by in silence.

Above all things I have to notice the great courage which our friends Chichimeclatecl and the two younger Xicotencatls displayed in our battles with the Mexicans, and altogether what efficient services they rendered us. The same I must say of Don Carlos, brother of the king of Tezcuco, who proved himself a man of extraordinary bravery and valour. There was also another chief, from one of the towns lying in the lake, but whose name I have forgotten, who showed astonishing feats of heroism; and many other chiefs among our allies signalised themselves in this siege; for which reason Cortes addressed them at considerable length in an eloquent speech, bestowing the highest praises on them, with thanks for their powerful assistance, and dismissed them with the promise that he would shortly present them with extensive territories, and numerous vassals, so as to make them all great caziques. As they had made a rich booty of cotton stuffs, gold, and other valuable matters, they returned highly delighted to their several homes; neither did they forget to carry away with them large quantities of the flesh of the Mexicans they had slain, which they had salted down and smoked, for their relations and friends, to regale them with it at their feasts.[29]

It is now a long time since we fought these terrible battles, which continued without intermission day and night, and I cannot be too thankful to the Almighty for my preservation; and now I must relate something extraordinary which befel myself.

The reader will remember above that I stated how we could see the Mexicans sacrificing our unfortunate countrymen; how they ripped open their breasts, tore out their palpitating hearts, and offered them to their abominable idols. This sight made a horrible impression on

my mind, yet no one must imagine that I was wanting either in courage or determination; on the contrary, I fearlessly exposed myself in every engagement to the greatest dangers, for I felt that I had courage. It was my ambition at that time to pass for a good soldier, and I certainly bore the reputation of being one; and what any of our men ventured, I ventured also, as every one who was present can testify; yet I must confess that I felt terribly agitated in spirit when I each day saw some of my companions being put to death in the dreadful manner above mentioned, and I was seized with terror at the thought that I might have to share a similar fate! Indeed the Mexicans had on two different occasions laid hold of me, and it was only through the great mercy of God that I escaped from their grasp.

I could no longer divest myself of the thoughts of ending my life in this shocking manner, and each time, before we made an attack upon the enemy, a cold shudder ran through my body, and I felt oppressed by excessive melancholy. It was then I fell upon my knees, and commended myself to the protection of God and the blessed Virgin; and from my prayers I rushed straightway into the battle, and all fear instantly vanished. This feeling appeared the more unaccountable to me, since I had encountered so many perils at sea, fought so many sanguinary battles in the open field, been present on so many dangerous marches through forests and mountains, stormed and defended so many towns; for there were very few great battles fought by our troops in New Spain in which I was not present. In these perils of various natures I never felt the fear I did subsequent to that time when the Mexicans captured sixty-two of our men, and we were compelled to see them thus slaughtered one by one, without being able to render them assistance. I leave those cavaliers to judge who are acquainted with war, and know from experience what dangers a man is exposed to in battle, whether it was want of courage which raised this feeling in me. Certain it is that I each day pictured to myself the whole extent of the danger into which I was obliged to plunge myself; nevertheless, I fought with my accustomed bravery, and all sensation of fear fled from me as soon as I espied the enemy.

Lastly, I must acquaint the reader that the Mexicans never killed our men in battle if they could possibly avoid it, but merely wounded them, so far as to render them incapable of defending themselves, in order that they might take as many of them alive as possible, to have the satisfaction of sacrificing them to their warrior-god Huitzilopochtli, after they had amused themselves by making them dance before him, adorned with feathers.

CHAPTER CLVII.

How Cortes orders the aqueduct of Chapultepec to be restored; and of various other matters.

THE first duty which Cortes imposed upon Quauhtemoctzin was to repair the aqueduct of Chapultepec, in order to supply Mexico with fresh water; also to bury the dead and all other putrid remains of flesh; to clean the streets, repair the causeways and bridges, and build up the houses and palaces which had been pulled down during the siege. After the space of two months the inhabitants were to return to the city, and the quarter which they and that we were to inhabit was marked out. Besides these, many other regulations were made, but which I have now forgotten.

Quauhtemoctzin and all his officers, after a time, complained to Cortes that many of our officers and soldiers had carried off their wives and daughters, whom they begged might now be restored to them. Cortes, in answer to this request, told them it would be a difficult matter to get the women out of the hands of the soldiers again, but promised he would do his best for them. He then gave them permission to go in search of the females they spoke of, and to bring those they found into his presence, that he might see how many of them had become converts to Christianity, and which of them felt a desire to return to their parents and husbands, as he would restore all those to them who felt inclined to leave. Cortes then issued orders to all three divisions to deliver up all those females who felt any inclination to return to their families.

The Mexicans did not fail to profit by this permission; they went from one quarter to another, and found most of the women again; but there were only three that showed any desire to return to their homes; the rest all remained with our soldiers. Many even concealed themselves on hearing that their relations were coming in search of them; others declared they would never again return to the worship of idols; and many of them were with child.

We now likewise constructed a secure harbour for our brigantines, and built a fort, to which a special alcalde was appointed, in the person of Alvarado (if I remember rightly); who filled this command until it was subsequently bestowed upon a certain Salazar de la Petrada, who came from Spain for that purpose.

The next thing which Cortes did was to collect all the gold, silver, and jewels that had been found in Mexico, of which, however, there

was very little; for Quauhtemoctzin, it was said, had ordered all the treasures to be thrown into the lake four days previous to his capture. A great quantity had likewise been purloined by the Tlascallans, Tezcucans, Huexotzincans, Cholullans, and other auxiliary troops which had assisted us in the siege, besides what had fallen into the hands of the troops on board the brigantines.

The crown officials were positive that Quauhtemoctzin had concealed the greater part, and asserted that Cortes was very pleased that the monarch refused to say a word where it was hidden; for he would then be able to get the whole treasure into his own possession.

The officers then proposed that Quauhtemoctzin and the king of Tlacupa, his most intimate friend and cousin, should be put to the torture, in order to extort from them a confession as to what had become of the treasures: but Cortes could not make up his mind to insult so great a monarch as Quauhtemoctzin, whose territory more than trebled that of Spain, and that for mere lust after gold.[30] Moreover, the monarch's household assured us they had given up all the gold they possessed to the officers of the crown, which, it was well known, amounted to 380,000 pesos, the whole of which had been melted into bars; and one thing is certain, that the emperor's and Cortes' fifths were deducted from that sum; but the conquistadores were not at all satisfied, and considered this sum much below the real amount, and several expressed their suspicion to Alderete, the royal treasurer, that Cortes' only reason for not wishing to put the monarch to the torture was, that he might secretly take possession of all his riches. Cortes, not willing that such a suspicion should any longer lie upon him, or that he should afterwards be called to an account on this score, at last consented that both should be put to the torture. Boiling hot oil was then applied to their feet; upon which they confessed that, four days prior to Quauhtemoctzin's capture, all the gold, with the cannon, crossbows, and muskets, which we had lost in the night of sorrows, when we retreated from Mexico, besides those which had been taken in Cortes' last defeat on the causeway, had been thrown into the lake. A number of good swimmers were then sent to dive for the treasure in the spot they pointed out, but nothing was found. Yet there was some truth in the statement; for I was myself present when Quauhtemoctzin led us to a large and deep reservoir of water, built of stone, which lay near his palace. From this reservoir we fished up a sun of gold similar to the one sent us by Motecusuma, besides many jewels and other trinkets, though all of little value. The king of Tlacupa also informed us that he had hidden all manner of valuable things in some large houses,

about twelve miles from Tlacupa, and he would accompany us there to point out the spot where he had buried them.

Alvarado was then despatched thither with six soldiers, among which number I also was; but when we arrived at the spot, this king assured us he had merely invented all this in the hopes that we would have killed him in a moment of anger at our disappointment. We consequently returned without the treasure, and thus there was no more smelting of gold into bars for the present. But it is an undoubted fact that there was very little left in the treasury of Motecusuma when it came into the hands of Quauhtemoctzin; for by far the greater part had been taken out as a present for our emperor.

Among the things which were collected together on this occasion, there were various objects of beautiful workmanship, which it would be too tedious to describe. One thing however is certain, and many were bold enough to assert it, that the emperor's fifths were not taken of a third part of what there really was.

I said above that there was some truth in what was stated by Quauhtemoctzin with regard to his having ordered a quantity of gold and other things to be thrown into the lake. I, with many of my companions proved this to be a fact, for we frequently dived to the bottom of the water in the spot which had been pointed out by the monarch. Each time we brought up some trifling trinket or other, which were afterwards demanded of us by Cortes and the royal treasurer. On one occasion they both accompanied us to this spot, and took a number of good divers with them, who brought up various ornaments of gold, worth altogether about one hundred pesos; but this was nothing in comparison to the treasure which was said to have been thrown in by the command of the monarch.

When the gold we took on this occasion came to be divided, the officers and all our men were of opinion that what would fall to each one's share would scarcely be worth accepting; wherefore father Olmedo, Avila, Alvarado, and other cavaliers proposed to Cortes, that the whole should be distributed among the invalids, the blind, the lame, the deaf, and those who had been accidentally burnt by powder; assuring him that we others who enjoyed good health, would gladly accede to this. Their object in making this proposal was to induce Cortes to add so much to each one's share as to make it worthy of our acceptance; for the suspicion was become pretty general that he had concealed the greater part of Quauhtemoctzin's treasure.

In answer to this Cortes said he would first see how much each man's share amounted to, and he would try if he could not satisfy all

parties. Our officers and men now insisted that this calculation should instantly be gone into, when it was found that every cavalry soldier would have to receive 100 pesos, and the musketeers and cross-bowmen I forget how much. None of the men would accept of this miserable pittance, and they began to throw out bitter complaints against Cortes and the royal treasurer, who excused himself by saying, that there was nothing more for them, as Cortes had deducted for himself an equal portion with the crown, and had besides claimed large sums in payment for the horses which had been killed, and such like; also, many curious objects of value had not at all been added to the common stock, but had been set apart as particular presents for the emperor. They should not, therefore, concluded Alderete, cavil with him about it, but with Cortes.

As there were friends and partisans among our troops of the governor of Cuba, and soldiers of Narvaez's corps who were besides this ill inclined towards Cortes, they obstinately refused to accept of the gold which was offered them, saying, they were entitled to much more.

About this time Cortes was staying at Cojohuacan, and inhabited a large palace, the walls of which had been recently fresh plastered and white-washed, so that they were well adapted for writing on with charcoal or other colours. Every morning that came, a couple of biting epigrams or satires were found written on these walls, either in prose or rhyme. One time for instance you would read: *The sun, moon, stars, firmament, the sea and the earth have their fixed course, and if ever they do diverge from their regular course, they always correct themselves again; may Cortes, in his love of power, take this as a precept.* At another time: *We are much more conquered ourselves than conquerors, and should not be called the conquerors of New Spain, but the conquered of Cortes.* Then again: *Cortes is not content with taking his share of the gold as general, but must also have his royal fifths.* Again: *Alas! how my heart does grieve, ever since I have seen my share of the booty!* And then again: *Diego Velasquez has spent all his fortune to discover the coast up to Panuco, but Cortes has reaped the harvest.* Such like sayings were numerous, many of which I should not wish to repeat here.

Cortes never neglected to read these epigrams as soon as he rose in the morning; the greater part of which were in rhyme, and not exactly so homely as those above quoted. As he was himself a bit of a poet, he wrote answers in verse beneath them, which had always reference to his deeds of arms, and tended to lower those of Diego Velasquez, Grijalva, and of Narvaez. These, his answers, were so

pointed, that each day the epigrams became more severe, when Cortes at length wrote: *White wall, the paper of fools!* And the following morning was found under it: *And of the wise and honest!* Our general very well knew who were the writers of these verses; namely, a certain Tirado, one of Velasquez's partisans, and son-in-law of the elder Ramirez, who lived in la Puebla; a certain Villalobos, who returned afterwards to Spain; and one Mansilla, with others, who were always ready to oppose Cortes in everything. These verses grew at length of so scandalous a nature, that father Olmedo told Cortes he ought to put a stop to them. Our general followed this good advice, and ordered that no one henceforth should presume to dirty the walls with any beastly sayings, under threats of severe punishment.

For the rest we were all deeply in debt. A crossbow was not to be purchased for less than forty or fifty pesos, a musket cost one hundred, a sword fifty, and a horse from 800 to 1000 pesos, and above. Thus extravagantly had we to pay for everything! A surgeon, who called himself Mastre Juan, and who had cured some very severe wounds, demanded most exorbitant fees for his cures. There was also an apothecary and barber, named Murcia, who likewise cured wounds. Various other impositions were practised, and payment was demanded of the men as soon as they had obtained their shares of the booty.

Serious complaints were made about this, and Cortes knew no other remedy than to appoint two men of business-like habits and of well-known honesty, to examine each demand and tax the amount. One of these persons was named Santclara, the other Llerena, and no debt was considered valid unless it had been examined by them; and two years were allowed to liquidate a debt we were unable to pay at the moment.

In the smelting of the gold there was also allowed an eighth of alloy to every ounce, to assist the men in the purchase of the necessaries of life, as about that time a number of vessels had arrived at Vera Cruz with various kinds of merchandise. But we derived no advantage from this, on the contrary it proved very prejudicial to us; for the merchants added the same per centage to the price of their goods, and sold for five pesos what was only worth three, and so this alloy became, as the Indians termed it, *tepuzque*, or copper. This expression afterwards became so common among us, that we added it to the names of distinguished cavaliers, to express the worth of their character; as for instance we would say, Señor Don Juan of so much tepuzque.

Complaints were now made of the excess of alloy which was mixed

with the gold; at length two gold workers were even detected in stamping the gold mark on pure copper, in punishment for which Cortes ordered them to be hung. But all these are stories which do not exactly belong to my history.

Our general becoming weary of the continued reproaches which were thrown out against him, and the everlasting petitions for loans and advance in pay, determined at once to get rid of the most troublesome fellows, by forming settlements in those provinces which appeared most eligible for this purpose. He accordingly despatched Sandoval to Tuztepec, to form a settlement there, and punish the Mexican garrison lying in that township, for having, about the time of our unfortunate retreat from Mexico, put to death sixty Spaniards, and six Spanish ladies, all of Narvaez's corps. He was, first of all, to leave a settlement at Medellin, then to proceed to the river Guacasualco, form a settlement in the harbour there, and then subdue the province of Panuco.

Rodrigo Rangel and Pedro de Ircio were ordered off to Vera Cruz; the younger Juan Velasquez to Colima and Villa Fuerte, in the province of Zacatula; Christobal de Oli, who about this time married a Portuguese lady, named Doña Filipa de Araujo, was sent to Mechoacan; and Francisco de Horozco was commissioned with the colonization of Oaxaca.

The inhabitants of the provinces I have just mentioned would not at first credit that Mexico had fallen; but when they found it to be a fact, the kings and caziques of those distant provinces sent ambassadors to congratulate Cortes on his victory, and to declare themselves vassals of our emperor; as also to convince themselves with their own eyes that we had really levelled that terrible city to the ground. Each of these ambassadors brought with them valuable presents in gold, and many had their young sons with them, to whom they pointed out the ruins of Mexico, just as we would show our children the spot where Troy once stood.

I will now answer a question which the curious reader will surely ask himself, namely, why we, the true Conquistadores of New Spain, and of the strong city of Mexico, did not settle down there, but selected other provinces by preference? The reason is, that we had learnt from Motecusuma's rent-rolls where those districts lay from which he derived the greatest quantity of gold, cacao, and cotton stuffs. All our thoughts and desires were bent upon those provinces whence the monarch obtained the largest tribute in gold, and when we found that even Sandoval, one of our chief officers, and a particular friend of Cortes, likewise left Mexico for the provinces, we no longer hesitated to follow his example;

the more so, as there were no gold mines in the neighbourhood of Mexico, nor did it produce cotton or cacao, but merely maguey and maise, from the former of which the inhabitants prepare their wine. We therefore considered the country surrounding the metropolis very poor, and we consequently settled in other provinces, though we were greatly disappointed in our expectations! This Cortes had well foreseen, and I still remember that he said to me, when I requested his permission to accompany Sandoval: "Upon my conscience, brother Bernal Diaz del Castillo, you are making a great mistake. I should feel delighted if you would stay with me in Mexico; but if you have made up your mind to accompany your friend Sandoval, I will not oppose your wishes, and may God be with you. You may rely upon it I will take every opportunity to promote your welfare; but I am sure you will soon regret having left me."

Before we commenced our march each man received an account of his share of the booty, when it was found that all our shares of the gold were due to the officers of the crown, in payment for the slaves we had bought at the auctions.

I will not here trouble the reader by enumerating what number of horse, crossbow-men, musketeers, or other soldiers left for the provinces, nor will I give the date of the month, but merely inform him that the first troops left a few days after the capture of Quauhtemoctzin, and the second expedition two months later.

I must now relate the important news which arrived about this time from Vera Cruz.

CHAPTER CLVIII.

How a certain Christobal de Tapia arrived in Vera Cruz, with the appointment of governor of New Spain.

After Cortes had despatched these several detachments to bring the provinces into complete subjection, and leave settlements in them, a certain Christobal de Tapia, who had been veedor at St. Domingo, arrived at Vera Cruz, with the appointment of governor of New Spain, which had been procured him by Fonseca, bishop of Burgos. He likewise brought with him several letters from the bishop for Cortes, and many others of the conquistadores, as also for the officers of Narvaez's corps, by which they were desired to support Tapia in the government. Besides this appointment, which was drawn up in due form by the

bishop, Tapia had several other blank papers with him, which were merely signed, so that he was at liberty to fill them up as he might think proper, by which means he would obtain unlimited power in New Spain. He was ordered to make us vast promises if we assisted him in his government, but to threaten us with severe punishment if we refused to obey him.

As soon as Tapia arrived at Vera Cruz, he showed his appointment to Gonzalo de Alvarado, who was then commandant of that place, as Rodrigo Rangel, who had previously filled that office, had recently been deprived of it by Cortes, but for what reason I cannot say.

Alvarado perused these papers with the most respectful veneration, as containing the commands of his emperor and master; but as to acting up to their contents, he told Tapia he must previously consult with the alcaldes and regidors of the town, to take the matter into mature consideration, and investigate as to how he had obtained the appointment, as he (Tapia) could not expect that they should exactly place implicit belief in what he said, and they should also like to convince themselves whether his imperial majesty was really cognizant of the drawing up of this appointment.

As Tapia was by no means satisfied with this answer, they advised him to repair to Mexico, where he would find Cortes, with all his officers and troops, who would, no doubt, on perusing his papers, pay him the respect which was due to his appointment.

Upon this Tapia wrote to Cortes, and acquainted him in what capacity he had come to New Spain. Now as Cortes was remarkable for his great tact, he answered this man in much more courteous terms than the former had used in his letter to him, saying the most obliging and pleasant things; at the same time he despatched several of our principal officers to visit Tapia at Vera Cruz. These were Alvarado, Sandoval, Diego de Soto, Andreas de Tapia, and a certain Valdenebro, to all of whom Cortes sent couriers with orders for their immediate return from the provinces, and to repair to Vera Cruz. He likewise requested father Melgarejo to hasten thither, in order to be present at the meeting; but Tapia had already started for Mexico, to wait upon Cortes himself, and was met on his road by our officers, who paid him the greatest respect, and proposed that he should turn off with them to Sempoalla. When arrived there they requested him to produce his papers, that they might convince themselves whether or not he was really sent by his imperial majesty, and whether his appointment bore the royal signature. If he could convince them of this, continued our officers, they would immediately promise obedience to him, in the name of Cortes and the whole of New Spain.

Tapia then produced his papers, and all the officers acknowledged, with respectful veneration, that, to all appearances, his appointment came direct from his majesty; but that it was impossible the emperor could be cognizant of all the particulars, nor of how matters stood in general, and they were determined to petition his majesty against his appointment. They assured him he was not fit for the important office of governor of New Spain; that the bishop of Burgos, the avowed enemy of the Conquistadores, the faithful servants of his majesty, had procured this appointment without first acquainting his majesty with the real state of affairs, merely to favour the governor of Cuba, and him (Tapia), to whom he had promised one of his own nieces in marriage, a certain Doña Fonseca.

When Tapia found that all his eloquence, papers, letters, promises, and threats availed him nothing, he fell ill from downright vexation. Our officers then wrote Cortes word of everything that had transpired, and advised him to forward a few bars of gold, with some jewels, to sooth Tapia in his excessive disappointment; all of which our general sent without delay, and our officers purchased some negroes and three horses from Tapia, who then returned to St. Domingo. Neither did he meet with the best of receptions there, as the royal court of audience and the Hieronymite brotherhood had been exceedingly vexed with him for having persisted in going to New Spain, though they had so strongly advised him not to do so, as the time was badly chosen, and his arrival there would create disputes, and only tend to interrupt the progress of the conquest of New Spain. But Tapia had placed all his reliance on the protection of the bishop of Burgos, wherefore they had not dared to detain him by force in St. Domingo, particularly as his appointment had been made out by the president of the council of the Indies, and as the emperor himself still continued in Flanders.'

I will now return to Cortes' plan of forming settlements. Alvarado, as I have mentioned above, was sent for this purpose to a province abounding in gold, called Tuztepec, which must not be confounded with Tutepec, whither Sandoval was despatched for the same end. Sandoval was also to make a settlement on the river Panuco, as Cortes had received intelligence that a certain Francisco de Garay had fitted out an extensive armament for the same object, in which Cortes wished to anticipate him.

About this time our general again sent Rodrigo Rangel to Vera Cruz as commandant of that place, and ordered Gonzalo de Alvarado to conduct Narvaez to Cojohuacan, where Cortes still occupied the same palace, until the one should be finished which was building for him in Mexico. Cortes' motive for ordering Narvaez to be brought to Mexico

was, because he had been informed that, in a conversation he had had with Christobal de Tapia, he thus addressed him: "Señor, you are come here with the same lawful authority as I came before you, but it will avail you no more than it did me, who arrived, moreover, in this country with so large a body of troops. I advise you to be upon your guard, lest they put you to death. You have no time to lose; for the wheel of fortune still turns in favour of Cortes and his men. Strive to get as much gold out of them as you can, and with that journey to his majesty in Spain, and relate to him how matters stand here; and if you can rely upon the bishop Fonseca's protection, so much the better for your cause. This is the best advice I can give you."

Narvaez, on his journey to Mexico, was greatly surprised at the large towns he passed through; but when he came to Tezcuco, then to Cojohuacan, and saw the lake, with the numerous other large towns, and Mexico itself, he was perfectly astonished.

Cortes had given orders that he should be treated with the utmost respect, and, immediately on his arrival, was to be brought into his presence. Narvaez, on coming up to our general, fell down on one knee to kiss his hand. Cortes, however, would not consent to this, but, raising him up, embraced him affectionately, and desired him to take a seat next to his person; when Narvaez thus addressed him: "General! I am now convinced, from what I have seen of this vast country and its numerous towns, that of all the deeds of arms which you have accomplished in New Spain with your troops, the least victory has been that which you gained over me and my troops; and had these even been much more numerous I am sure we should have been defeated. You cannot be too highly honoured and rewarded for having subjected so vast a territory, with so many large cities, to the sceptre of our emperor. I am convinced that the most famous generals of our time will agree with me, that what you have accomplished surpasses everything that the greatest and most renowned captains have ever done before you, in the same degree as the city of Mexico surpasses every other town of the world in strength of position. Indeed, you and your brave soldiers have merited the greatest rewards from his majesty."

To these and other flattering speeches, Cortes answered, "What we have done was certainly not of ourselves alone, but through the great mercy of the Almighty, who protected us, and the good fortune which always attends the troops of our great emperor."

Cortes now also began to make the necessary regulations for the rebuilding of the great and celebrated city of Mexico; he marked out

the ground for the churches, monasteries, private dwellings, public squares, and assigned a particular quarter of the town for the Mexican population. This city was rebuilt with so much splendour, that, in the opinion of those who have travelled through the greater part of Christendom, Mexico, after its restoration, was a larger and a more populous city than any they had seen, and the architectural style of the houses more magnificent.

While Cortes was busily engaged with these matters, he received intelligence that the province of Panuco had revolted, and the whole of its numerous and warlike population had risen up in arms. Many of the Spanish settlers had been murdered by the inhabitants, and the few who had escaped begged for immediate assistance.

As soon as our general heard this bad news, he determined to march thither in person, as all our chief officers were absent, with their respective detachments, in the provinces. He therefore collected all the cavalry, crossbow-men, musketeers, and other troops he could; and it fortunately happened that considerable recruits arrived in Mexico about this time from those who came in the suite of Tapia, and of the troops of Vazquez de Aillon, whose expedition to Florida terminated so miserably; besides that, numbers had arrived from the Caribbee and other islands.

Cortes left a strong garrison in Mexico, under the command of Diego Soto, and set out on his march with no more than 250 Spanish troops, including the musketeers, crossbow-men, and 130 horse; but to this small body he added 10,000 Mexican auxiliaries.

Before Cortes left, Christobal de Oli returned from the province of Mechoacan, which he had completely subdued, and was accompanied by many caziques, as also by the son of Consi, the great cazique of the province. He likewise brought with him a large quantity of gold, but of very inferior quality, being considerably mixed with copper and silver.

This expedition to the province of Panuco cost our general a large sum of money, which he subsequently requested the emperor to reimburse him; but the board of finance refused this, and told him he ought to bear all the expenses himself, as he had subdued that province to suit his own private views, and to anticipate Garay, who was fitting out an extensive armament in Jamaica for the same purpose.

Cortes found the whole province of Panuco in a terrible state of rebellion. He several times offered the inhabitants peace, but to no purpose, and the consequence was a series of battles, of which ten were very severe, three Spaniards and four horses being killed, besides one

hundred of the Mexican auxiliaries. In these battles the enemy had brought 60,000 men into the field; yet Cortes defeated them with considerable loss, and they never after felt any inclination to fight against him.

Cortes, finding that the district he was in contained abundance of provisions, staid eight days in a township near the field of battle, and, ardently desirous of restoring peace to the country, he sent father Olmedo and ten distinguished caziques he had taken prisoners in the last battles, with Doña Marina and Aguilar, to the enemy. Father Olmedo then addressed the several chiefs in a suitable speech, and asked them, among other things, how they could have entertained a hope of maintaining their independence, as they well knew that the city of Mexico, which had been defended by so many brave warriors, was obliged to surrender to our emperor. They ought, therefore, to sue for peace, and he promised them that Cortes would pardon their past behaviour. By these and other representations which the excellent father made to them, mixed up with a few threats, they were brought to their senses, and began to reflect on the large body of men they had lost, and the number of towns which had been sacked and burnt to the ground; so that, at length, they agreed to send a message of peace to Cortes, with a few ornaments of gold. Our general received the ambassadors very kindly, and assured them of his future friendship.

From this place Cortes marched, with half of his troops, to the river Chila, which lay at about twenty miles from the sea shore, and requested the tribes inhabiting the country on the opposite side to send him messengers of peace. But as their bellies were still full of the flesh of the many Spaniards they had killed belonging to the several expeditions which had been sent thither during the two last years by Garay, to form settlements, they imagined they would be able to overthrow Cortes with the same ease. They likewise placed great dependence in the inaccessibility of the places they inhabited, which lay between large lakes, rivers, and morasses; they therefore not only refused to return an answer, but murdered the ambassadors whom Cortes had sent to them. He, however, still remained quiet for a few days, to see whether they would not alter their minds; but, finding they persisted in their hostile feeling towards him, he ordered all the canoes which lay in the river to be seized; and with these, and some boats he ordered to be constructed from the wrecks of the old vessels belonging to Garay's expedition, he crossed the river with one hundred and fifty men, among which there were fifty horse, the rest being, for the greater part, cross-bow-men and musketeers. The enemy, who had posted strong detach-

ments at different points along the banks of the river, allowed our troops to cross unmolested, but were ready to receive them on the opposite side.

If these Guastecs had come with great numbers into the field on previous occasions, they came this time with more, and fell upon our men like so many furious lions. In this encounter they killed two soldiers and wounded above thirty others; three horses were likewise killed and fifteen wounded. Our Mexican auxiliaries also suffered a considerable loss; but Cortes gave the enemy so rough a reception that they soon took to flight, leaving behind them great numbers of killed and wounded.

Cortes quartered his troops for the night in a township which was quite deserted by its inhabitants, but where he found abundance of provisions. The following morning, as his men were looking about the place, they came to a temple, inside of which they found suspended various articles of Spanish dress, the scalps and the tanned skins of the faces of several Spaniards, with the beards attached to them. These were the remains of the soldiers of Garay's expedition to the river Panuco. In many of these skins our men recognized former acquaintances, and some even their intimate friends. It was indeed a melancholy sight to them, and they took down those miserable remains to give them Christian burial.

From this place Cortes marched to another township, and observed every military precaution, the men being each moment prepared for an attack, as he well knew that the tribes of this province were very warlike. His spies soon came in with the intelligence that large bodies of the enemy lay in ambush to fall suddenly on our men while they should be dispersed among the houses.

Our troops being thus apprized of the enemy's intentions, the latter were unable to do them much injury; yet they bravely attacked our troops, and fought with great intrepidity for about half an hour, when our cavalry and musketeers succeeded in putting them to flight. In this engagement Cortes had two horses killed, besides seven others wounded, and fifteen of the men so severely that three died shortly after. These Indians have the peculiar custom, when they are compelled to retreat, to face about three several times to renew the attack, a mode of warfare which has seldom been found among these tribes. After this battle, the enemy retreated to a river which was of considerable depth, and very rapid. Our cavalry and light-armed foot pursued them most vigorously, and wounded great numbers.

The day following, Cortes marched further up the country, and

passed through several townships, but every one was deserted by its inhabitants. In these towns they found, in subterranean vaults, a great number of large earthen jars filled with the wine of the country.[31] Our general, after marching in this way for another five days, and nowhere meeting with any of the inhabitants, returned to the river Chila.

Cortes now again invited the inhabitants on the opposite side of the river to send ambassadors to conclude peace with him, and this time he was more successful; for, as they had lost a great number of men, and feared another incursion into their country, they sent word that they would despatch messengers of peace to us after the lapse of four days, which time they required to collect some gold for a present. Cortes therefore patiently awaited the time specified; but, as no one came, he then determined to attack a large township which lay on the banks of a lake, surrounded by rivers and morasses. This place he was resolved to attack from the lake side, to do which he had to cross the latter; and this he accomplished by means of canoes fastened two and two together. On these a part of our troops, with a great number of Mexicans, embarked in a dark rainy night, passed unobserved across the lake, and fell into the town before the inhabitants were in the least aware of it. The town was completely destroyed, and most of the inhabitants killed, our Mexican auxiliaries carrying off a rich booty.

As soon as the inhabitants of the surrounding neighbourhood received information of this, they no longer hesitated as to what they should do; and, in the space of five days, messengers of peace came pouring in from all sides; the most distant mountain tribes, whose territory our troops had not yet visited, alone refusing to send any ambassadors.

Cortes then laid the foundation of a town, about four miles from the river Chila, and left there one hundred and fifty Spaniards, among whom were twenty-seven horse, thirty-six musketeers and crossbowmen. The whole of the townships which had sued for peace he divided among these troops as commendaries. Of this town, which received the name of Santisteban del Puerto, he appointed Pedro Vallejo commandant.

Cortes was just on the point of leaving this new town, and of marching back to Mexico, when he received certain information that three townships, which had previously stood at the head of the rebellion in this province, had again conspired to revolt. The inhabitants of these three townships had put a great number of Spaniards to death after they had sued for peace and had declared themselves vassals of our emperor, and now were using every means to persuade the population of the

surrounding neighbourhood to join them in an attack upon our new settlement, and kill every Spaniard left behind when Cortes should have departed with the remaining troops for Mexico. Cortes having convinced himself of the truth of this report, burnt the three towns to the ground, but they were subsequently rebuilt by these same tribes.

About this time the following misfortune happened. Cortes, previous to leaving Mexico, had sent orders to Vera Cruz for a quantity of wine, preserved fruits, and biscuits, besides a number of horse shoes, all of which was to be forwarded to the province of Panuco. A vessel without delay was despatched with these things from Vera Cruz, which arrived safe off the coast of Panuco, where, unfortunately, it was overtaken by a terrific storm from the south, and went to the bottom of the sea: only three of the crew were saved, who clung to some loose pieces of wood and were driven to a small island about sixteen miles from the mainland, which was covered in places with white sand.

Every night great numbers of seals came on shore to sleep on the sand, and these were the means of keeping the three men alive, who killed them and roasted their flesh at a fire which they kindled after the Indian manner, by rubbing two pieces of wood vehemently together. By digging a well towards the middle of the island they procured themselves fresh water, and at last even found a species of fig, so that they could not at least die of hunger; and in this way they continued to live for the space of two months, when they were rescued in the following manner.

Cortes having waited a length of time in vain at Santisteban del Puerto for this vessel, wrote to his major-domo at Mexico to know the reason why the things he sent for had not arrived. When his major-domo received this letter he soon guessed that some accident must have happened to the vessel, and instantly sent out another in search of her. It pleased God in his great mercy that the vessel should approach the small island where the three Spaniards had been cast on shore, who had had the good sense to keep a large fire burning night and day.

The reader can easily picture to himself the great joy of these men when this vessel arrived off the island: they immediately embarked in her, and sailed for Vera Cruz. One of these men, whose name was Celiano, subsequently lived in Mexico.

Cortes was on his way to Mexico when he received information that several tribes which inhabited the wildest part of the mountains had risen up in arms, and were committing every kind of depredation against those of their neighbours who had entered into an alliance with us. He therefore determined to put an end to these hostilities before he

returned to the metropolis; but these ferocious tribes being apprized of his approach, lay wait for him in a dangerous mountain pass, attacked his baggage, killed many of the Indian porters, and plundered them of all they carried. Our cavalry, which now came up to the assistance of those who had charge of the baggage, lost two horses from the rugged state of the road. These Indians, however, had to pay dearly for all this when our troops reached their towns, for the Mexican warriors showed very little mercy, and killed and took numbers of them prisoners. The cazique and his chief officer were hung, and the baggage of which they had plundered our troops was retaken.

After the execution of these men, Cortes commanded the Mexicans to stay hostilities, and he summoned the chiefs and papas of the province to send him ambassadors, who now arrived without delay, and acknowledged themselves subjects of our emperor. Cortes then appointed the brother of him who had been executed, cazique of the place; and, after thus restoring peace to the province, he continued his march to Mexico.

I must here observe that there is not a more wicked, a more uncivilized, or a more filthy people in the whole of New Spain than the inhabitants of the province of Panuco; and in no part were human sacrifices found to be so frequent or so barbarous. The inhabitants were excessive drunkards, and guilty of every kind of abomination: however, they met with due punishment; for, after our troops had visited their country a few times with fire and sword, they received, in the person of Nuño de Guzman, who became governor there, a much severer scourge. He sold almost the whole of them for slaves to the different islands, as we shall see in the proper place.

CHAPTER CLIX.

How Cortes and the officers of the crown forward to Spain the wardrobe of Motecusuma, and the emperor's share of the booty; and what further happened.

After this campaign in the province of Panuco, Cortes was busily occupied with the rebuilding of the city of Mexico.

Alonso de Avila, who had been despatched to the island of St. Domingo to communicate there in Cortes' name with the royal court of audience and the Hieronymite brotherhood, had by this time returned to Mexico, and had obtained for Cortes the necessary powers from the

above courts to subdue the whole of New Spain, turn the inhabitants into slaves, mark them with a red-hot iron, and distribute the Indians into commendaries in the same manner as was customary at Hispaniola, Cuba, and Jamaica. This power granted to Cortes was to remain in force until the emperor's pleasure was known on this head. The Hieronymite brotherhood duly apprized his majesty of all this, and despatched a vessel for that purpose to Spain; and though the young emperor was at that time still in Flanders, their despatches arrived safely in his hands. As the Hieronymite brotherhood were well aware of the bad feeling which the bishop of Burgos always had evinced towards us, they purposely omitted to acquaint him with the nature of these despatches; and, upon the whole, they never communicated with him excepting on matters of trifling import.

Alonso de Avila, as I have before remarked, was a man who feared no one, and had formerly held some office immediately under the bishop of Burgos, so that it was fortunate he happened to be absent upon the mission just mentioned, in St. Domingo, when Christobal de Tapia arrived at Vera Cruz with the appointment of governor of New Spain, as the latter had brought letters from the bishop to him, and on such an occasion the determined character of Avila might have greatly injured our general's cause.

Cortes, who was thoroughly acquainted with this man's disposition, always strove to keep him at a distance from his person; and now again, upon the advice of father Olmedo, he presented him with the lucrative township of Quauhtitlan, which would give him constant occupation; and Cortes added to this a considerable sum of money, by which he gained him so completely over to his side, that he soon after intrusted him with a most important mission, by despatching him and Quiñones, the captain of the guards, to Spain, as his own procuradores, and those of New Spain in general; and provided them with two vessels which were to carry over to the emperor 88,000 pesos, in gold bars, and the wardrobe of Motecusuma, which had hitherto been in the possession of Quauhtemoctzin. The latter was a valuable present, and well worthy of our great emperor's acceptance, as it contained jewels of the most precious kind, pearls of the size of hazel nuts, and various other precious stones, which I should not like to enumerate singly, even if my memory would allow me. At the same time were sent the bones of the giants which we found in the temple of Cojohuacan, similar to those bones which were previously given to us by the Tlascallans, and which we had sent to Spain on a former occasion.

Three tigers, and several other curiosities, which I have now forgotten by name, were likewise shipped on board these two vessels.

The chief magistrates of Mexico, on this occasion, wrote a letter to the emperor, and we, the conquistadores, with father Olmedo and the royal treasurer, drew up an humble address to our monarch, in which we first of all mentioned with praise the many important and faithful services which Cortes and all of us had rendered to his imperial majesty; we gave him a full account of the siege of the city of Mexico and the discovery of the southern ocean, and added we were convinced these countries would prove a source of great wealth to Spain. We then requested his majesty to send to New Spain a bishop and monks of different religious orders, but all to be pious and well-informed men, that they might assist us in extending the holy catholic faith in these countries. We likewise humbly petitioned his majesty to appoint Cortes viceroy of New Spain, as he had proved himself so meritorious and faithful an officer to the Spanish crown. In the same way we begged the favour for ourselves, that all appointments made by the crown in this country might exclusively be given to us the conquistadores or to our sons. Further, we requested his majesty not to send any lawyers into the country, as those persons, with all their learning, would merely breed lawsuits, discord, and confusion throughout the whole country. We then mentioned how Christobal de Tapia had been sent as viceroy to New Spain by the appointment of the bishop of Burgos, assuring his majesty that Tapia was not fit to fill such an important situation, and that if he had been allowed to enter upon the viceroyalty of New Spain, that country would undoubtedly have been lost again to the Spanish crown. We were compelled to clear up all these circumstances to his majesty, as we feared the bishop of Burgos had not only omitted to lay before his majesty our previous despatches, but had also misrepresented things to him, in order to favour his friends Velasquez and Tapia, to the latter of whom he had promised the hand of his niece Doña Petronella de Fonseca. Tapia had certainly produced papers relative to his appointment, of the genuineness of which there could really be no doubt, and we had indeed perused them with deep veneration, and we would immediately have obeyed the instructions they contained if we had considered Tapia a proper person to fill the important office of governor; but as he was neither a soldier nor a man of sufficient mind and determination of character, nor possessed of talents requisite for a viceroy, we found ourselves necessitated to inform his majesty of the whole state of affairs, which was the real object of this present humble address of

his majesty's faithful and obedient servants. We then prayed his majesty to decide in these matters, and particularly requested that he would not allow the bishop of Burgos in any way to interfere in matters which concerned Cortes and ourselves, as otherwise all further conquests we contemplated in New Spain would be interrupted; nor should we even be able to maintain peace in the provinces that were subdued. As a proof of the bishop's enmity towards us, we mentioned that he had forbidden the two harbour masters of Seville, Pedro de Isasaga and Juan Lopez de Recalte, to allow any arms or soldiers which were destined for Cortes or our army in general, to leave that place. We then gave his majesty an account of the recent campaign of Panuco, how the inhabitants had been obliged to sue for peace, and had declared themselves vassals of his majesty; what terrible battles they had fought with Cortes, and how they had killed all the officers and soldiers which Garay had sent thither from time to time. This campaign, we went on to say, cost Cortes above 60,000 pesos, which he had paid out of his own private purse, the reimbursement of which he had in vain solicited from the royal treasurers; that Garay was fitting out a new armament in Jamaica destined for the province of Panuco, but it was advisable that his majesty should issue orders for him to postpone that expedition until we should have completely subdued the country, that he might not again sacrifice the lives of his men to no purpose, and create an insurrection in the country, which would be sure to ensue if he arrived there beforehand, as the Indians, and particularly the Mexicans, would immediately conclude that there was no unanimity in the operations of the Spanish generals; conspiracies would be formed, and the whole country would rise up into open rebellion.

These and many other things we wrote to his majesty, nor was Cortes' pen idle on this occasion, for he also sent the emperor an account of every circumstance in a private despatch, which contained twenty pages, and I know their contents pretty well, as I read them all through with great attention. Among other things, he solicited his majesty's permission to proceed to Cuba in order to take the viceroy Diego Velasquez prisoner, and send him to Spain, there to stand his trial for having sent persons to murder him, Cortes, and for having upon the whole endeavoured to confuse the affairs of New Spain.

With these despatches, the money, and other valuable matters, Quiñones and Avila set sail from Vera Cruz on the 20th of December, 1522, and safely passed through the straits of Bahama. On their voyage two of the three tigers broke lose and made their escape, after

wounding several of the crew; it was then determined that the third should be killed, which was in fact the most ferocious of the three. Without any further accident they arrived off the island of Tercera, where they dropped anchor. During their stay on this island, Quiñones, who had a vast idea of his courage and was of a very amorous disposition, got into a quarrel about some female, and received such a terrible blow on the head that he died a few days after of the consequences, so that Avila had to transact all our business himself.

The two vessels then continued their voyage, but had not advanced far beyond the island of Tercera when they fell in with the redoubted French corsair Jean Florin, who attacked and took both vessels, carrying Avila with the crews to France.

About this same time Jean Florin captured another vessel, bound from St. Domingo, having on board above 20,000 pesos, besides a quantity of pearls, sugar, and a great number of cow hides. With these valuable prizes the corsair returned to France a wealthy man, and made the king and the lord high admiral of France splendid presents out of the things he had captured; and the whole of France was amazed at the treasures we thus forwarded to our emperor. This very circumstance even created a great desire in the mind of the French king to take possession of part of the Caribbee islands; and it was upon this occasion he exclaimed that our emperor could carry on the war with him solely with the riches he drew from the West Indies! And yet at that time the Spaniards had not subdued or even discovered Peru. The king of France on this occasion also sent word to our great emperor, that as he and the king of Portugal had divided the world between themselves, without offering him any part of it, he should like them to show him our father Adam's will, that he might convince himself whether he had really constituted them the sole heirs to these countries. As long as they refused to comply with this, he would consider himself justified to possess himself of everything he could on the high seas: and indeed it was not long before he again sent out Jean Florin with a small fleet, who took considerable prizes at sea, between Spain and the Canaries; but as he was returning home with them to France he fell in with three or four Biscay men of war, who attacked him with such determination, that after a severe engagement he was obliged to surrender, with the whole of his vessels, and he, with his captains, was brought in a prisoner to Seville. These prisoners were then immediately sent to the emperor, who, however, on the first intelligence of their capture, ordered them to be tried, when they were found guilty, and the whole of them were hung in the harbour of Pico.

Such was the miserable end of Jean Florin, who carried off to France all the gold we had intended for our emperor! As for Avila, he was detained a close prisoner in one of the French fortresses, as the king of France expected a large ransom for a man who had been commissioned to convey so vast a treasure from the new world to Spain; but Avila by some means or other succeeded in bribing the commandant of the fortress, and secretly sent intelligence to Spain of the object of his mission; he even managed to forward Cortes' despatches, with all his papers and our letters, either into the hands of the licentiate Nuñez, who was a cousin of Cortes, and reporter of the royal council of Madrid, or into those of Cortes' father or of Diego de Ordas. These papers were instantly despatched to his majesty in Flanders, without their being at all noticed to the bishop of Burgos, who had not been able to hide his pleasure when he heard that all the gold, with our despatches, had fallen into the hands of the French corsair.

From this moment we had nothing further to fear from the bishop, for his majesty now received full particulars of all the circumstances; and though he felt grieved at the loss of so much gold, yet he was in one sense pleased it had fallen into the hands of the French king, for it would convince that monarch we should never let our emperor want for money to wage war with him. He also sent peremptory orders to the bishop of Burgos to aid Cortes in every way with regard to the affairs of New Spain; adding, that he was shortly coming to Spain himself, in order to investigate the dispute between Cortes and the governor of Cuba. When news of the capture of Avila, with the loss of the whole treasure we sent by him, reached New Spain, we all felt exceedingly grieved; but Cortes immediately collected all the gold and silver he could, which had recently been brought in from the province of Mechoacan, and of this he ordered a cannon to be cast, which he intended as a present to the emperor, and gave to it the name of phœnix.

The government of the township of Quauhtitlan was also carried on in the name of Avila until the arrival, three years after, of his brother Gil Gonzalez in New Spain, who was deputed by Avila to take the sole government of his Indian property, as he himself was determined never again to cross the sea, though he had obtained the appointment of treasurer of Yucatan.

But all this is rather foreign to my narrative, and I will rather relate what happened to Sandoval and the other officers whom Cortes sent out to form settlements in the provinces. But so many circumstances happened in the meantime, that I was obliged to break the thread of my history, and they were certainly too important to withhold from the

curious reader. There was the arrival of Christobal de Tapia in Vera Cruz, which obliged Cortes to recall Sandoval and Alvarado from their expeditions into the provinces, in order that they might assist him with their excellent support and counsel in a matter of so much importance. Then there was the insurrection in the province of Panuco, and the mission to our emperor; and so it happened that my narrative became rather confused.

CHAPTER CLX.

How Sandoval arrives in the town of Tustepec, what he did there; his march to the river Guacasualco, and what further happened.

As soon as Sandoval arrived in the township of Tustepec, messengers of peace came to him from every part of the province, and there were only a few Mexican chiefs who durst not make their appearance, on account of the sixty Spaniards, with their wives, (all of Narvaez's corps,) who had been massacred in this place. It was two months after this tragical affair that I arrived at Tustepec with Sandoval, and I took up my quarters in a kind of tower, which had been a temple. In this same tower my unfortunate countrymen had sought refuge when they were attacked by the inhabitants, and had defended themselves until hunger, thirst, and wounds put an end to their existence. I selected this tower, which was very high, to rid myself of the moschetoes, which swarmed in this neighbourhood, and plagued us all day long; besides which, I was here in the immediate vicinity of Sandoval's quarters, which rendered mine doubly convenient to me.

Sandoval was very desirous of getting the above-mentioned chiefs into his power, and at length succeeded in capturing the principal one, who was tried, and sentenced to the stake. Several other Mexicans were brought in at the same time with this chief, but though they had equally deserved death, they were allowed to go at large, and thus one had to suffer for all. Sandoval then sent to the townships of the province of the Tzapotecs, which lay about forty miles further on, desiring them to despatch messengers of peace to him; but they refusing to do so, he ordered off the captain Briones (who had commanded one of the brigantines, and had, as he himself assured us, signalized himself in the Italian wars,) against them, with one hundred men, among whom there were thirty crossbow-men and musketeers, besides one hundred auxiliaries of the allied provinces. The Tzapotecs were duly apprized of

Briones's approach, and lay in ambush for him, from which they fell suddenly upon him, and wounded more than a third part of his men, of whom one died soon after. The Tzapotecs inhabit the most rugged and inaccessible mountain districts, where no cavalry can approach, and even the foot soldiers could with difficulty move along narrow paths, one behind the other; besides which, these mountains are enveloped in everlasting mists, and the dew is always falling, which renders the ground so slippery that it is dangerous to move along. The lances of this people were also very formidable, and much longer than ours, and provided with a species of blade made of flint, which is much sharper than a Spanish sword. They also had light shields, which covered the whole body, and they use the bow, the pike, and the sling. When these wild people, who are excessively nimble, bounded from one rock to another, where our men could not get at them, they communicated with each other by means of piping and shouting, and the noise rolled and resounded through the mountains for a length of time, until lost in distant echoes.

The captain Briones then returned with a great number of his men wounded, he himself having been struck by an arrow. The township where he met with this defeat was called Tiltepec, and the inhabitants subsequently submitted of their own accord, when the district was given as a commendary to a soldier, named Ojeda, the one-eyed, who at present lives in the town of San Ildefonso.

When Briones called upon Sandoval to give him an account of his expedition, and said a great deal about the courage of the Tzapotecs, Sandoval reminded him of the many bloody engagements he had spoken of in his Italian campaigns, and added, "It appears, nevertheless, captain, that you experienced hotter work on this occasion than in any of your previous battles?"

Briones, who appeared greatly annoyed, swore that he would at any time rather stand over against heavy cannon and a large army, would even rather fight against the Turks and Saracens, than against the Tzapotecs; and adduced good reasons for saying so.

To this Sandoval immediately answered, "Then I must say I am sorry I gave you that command; but after the many things you have told us of your Italian campaigns, I could not help thinking but this expedition would be a mere frolic to you. In what light will these Tzapotecs look upon us henceforth? At present they will certainly entertain a different notion of our bravery to what they did previously!"

After this unfortunate expedition, Sandoval sent word to the inhabitants of the province of Xaltepec that they should despatch ambassadors to us, and declare themselves vassals of our emperor. This tribe

also belongs to the Tzapotecs, and their country is bounded by that of the Minxes, another very courageous and warlike tribe, with whom the Xaltepecs happened to be at war just then. Twenty of the caziques and principal personages soon made their appearance, bringing with them a present of gold dust in ten small tubes, besides various pretty ornaments. These chiefs were clad in very large cotton cloaks, which hung down to their feet, and were embroidered after the manner of the Moorish mantle. They presented themselves to Sandoval with a most respectful demeanour, who received them most courteously, and gave them some glass beads. This kind reception emboldened them to beg of him that some of his teules might accompany them home, in order to assist their country in a war against the Minxes; but as Sandoval at that moment could not well spare any of his men, as a great part of Briones' detachment was wounded, and many suffering with fever, of which four men had recently died, he put off these chiefs with many flattering assurances, and promised them he would request Malinche, who was at Mexico, to send a strong body of teules to their assistance; in the meantime he would send eight of his companions with them to explore the dangerous passes and that part of the country from which they intended to fall upon the Minxes. But Sandoval's real motive in sending these ten soldiers with them was, that they might visit those districts, and particularly the mines whence the Xaltepecs obtained their gold. Three of the caziques Sandoval desired should remain with him, and the rest left in our company. It happened that there were three soldiers of the name of Castillo in Sandoval's troops, who all accompanied the caziques on this occasion. One was Alonso de Castillo, surnamed the *Discreet*, because he always gave a ready and suitable answer to any question that was put to him; the second was myself, whom the soldiers surnamed the *Gallant*, for at that time I prided myself very much on my courteous behaviour: the third Castillo had a very meditative countenance, and always took a long time to consider before he replied; but when he did it was sure to be something very ridiculous, and he was surnamed the *Deliberate*. But enough of this. We arrived in the province, and began diligently to explore the mines, accompanied by a great number of Indians, who washed the gold dust for us in a kind of trough, from the sand of three different rivers. In this way we obtained four tubes full of gold dust, each about the thickness of the middle finger. Sandoval was highly delighted when we brought him these, and concluded that the country must contain rich gold mines. He then divided the townships of the province among those of his men whom he intended leaving behind; for himself he took the

townships of Guazpaltepec, which at that time was by far the best property in this province, and lay in the neighbourhood of the mines, from which Sandoval collected above 15,000 pesos' worth of gold, and he was quite surprised at his own good fortune. The chief command of the province he gave to Luis Marin, and presented him with lands equal to an earldom; in the course of time, however, these possessions turned out less valuable than was at first expected. Sandoval also offered me some very good and valuable townships in this province, and I wish to heavens I had accepted of them. These places were called Maltlatan, Ozotekipa, and Orizaba, where the viceroy at present has a mill. I refused these possessions, because I considered that I was in honour bound not to leave Sandoval; who was my particular friend. He was well aware of my reasons, and in the subsequent campaigns I made with him he strove in every way to further my views.

In this province Sandoval laid the foundation of a town, which, by the desire of Cortes, he named Medellin, after the latter's native place, in Estremadura. There was a bay in this province, into which the Chalchocucea river[32] empties itself, or, as we termed it, the Banderas stream, where we made the 16,000 pesos during the expedition under Grijalva; at first all communication with Spain was from this harbour, until Vera Cruz became the chief port.

We now marched towards the river Guacasualco, and we may have been about 240 miles from the last-mentioned town, when we arrived on the confines of the province of Citla, the climate of which is the most bracing of all, the country itself abounding in provisions, and more thickly populated than any we had visited. It was of this province I remarked that it was forty-eight miles long, as many in breadth, with a vast population.

When we arrived at the river Guacasualco we sent for the caziques of the different townships; but as three days passed by without any one making his appearance, or our receiving any answer, we concluded the inhabitants were preparing to attack us. At first, indeed, they had resolved to oppose our crossing the river, but they soon came to a more reasonable determination, and arrived in our camp on the fifth day with a supply of provisions, and a few ornaments of very pure gold. They immediately offered to furnish us with a sufficient number of large canoes, if we felt any inclination to cross the river. Sandoval thanked them for their kind offer, but previously held a consultation with us as to whether it was advisable for all the troops to cross over at once; and we resolved that four men should first pass over, to see how matters stood in the township opposite, which lay close to the river side, and

to get the chief cazique, whose name was Tochel, into their power. Four of our men accordingly went across the river, and after looking well about them, they brought us word that everything wore the most peaceable aspect, and were accompanied by the son of Tochel, who came with another small present of gold. Sandoval was vastly pleased with this news, and desired the caziques to furnish him with 100 canoes, which were fastened two and two together, to convey the horses across the river. It happened to be the day of Pentecost when we crossed over, and for this reason we called the township, which lay on this river, Villa de Espiritu Santo; also because it was the anniversary of the day on which we defeated Narvaez under the cry of Espiritu Santo.

As this province submitted to our arms without offering any resistance, the flower of the troops which went out with Sandoval on this occasion, settled down here; as for instance, besides Sandoval himself, Luis Marin, Diego de Godoy, Francisco de Medina, Francisco Marmolejo, Francisco de Lugo, Juan Lopez de Aguirre, Hernando de Montes de Oca, Juan de Salamanca, Diego de Azamar, Mexia Rapapelo, Alonso de Grado, the licentiate Ledesma, Luis de Bustamente, Pedro Castellar, the captain Briones, a certain Mantilla, myself and several other cavaliers and men of distinction, all of whom I am unable to mention by name; but the reader may have some idea of our numbers, when I inform him that on days of parade, or whenever an alarm was sounded, we could always muster in the great square above eighty men on horseback; and it must be remembered that eighty horse at that time was more than five hundred at the present day; for horses were very scarce then in New Spain, excessively dear, and often not to be had at any price.

The following are the provinces which Sandoval divided into commendaries on this occasion, after they had been fully explored by our troops,—Guacasualco, Guazpaltepec, Tepeca, Chinanta, and the Tzapotecas; along the banks of the river then were: Copilco, Cimatan, Tabasco, the mountains of Cachula, the country of the Zoqueschas and of the Quilenes; the districts of Tacheapa, Cinacatan and Papanachasta. All these districts were divided among the inhabitants of the new town, and as far as regards myself I should have been perfectly contented if I could have kept what I obtained on this occasion; but the country was of itself not very productive, and then we were led into ruinous lawsuits with three towns, which had by degrees sprung up in these parts; for instance, the town of Vera Cruz laid claim to Guazpaltepec, Chinanta, and Tepeca; Tabasco to the province of the

Quilenes and Zogues; and, lastly, the town of Santo Ildefonso to the province of the Tzapotecs. If we had been allowed to retain our original boundaries we should have been rich men, but when his majesty issued an order that the boundaries of every Indian township and of all the Spanish towns should be accurately defined, our possessions became so terribly curtailed on every side, that at last we had nothing but a blank remaining, which is the reason why Guacasualco, which was at first the most beautiful and most thriving settlement of all, and where the most noble of the conquistadores of all New Spain had settled, fell to nothing again, and is at present a mere village, with a scanty population. While Sandoval was busily occupied with the founding of this town and in subduing other provinces, intelligence arrived that a vessel had run into the river Aguayalco, which forms a very bad harbour, and lies about sixty miles from Guacasualco. The passengers on board this vessel were Donna Catalina, the wife of Cortes; her brother Juan Juarez, who subsequently settled in Mexico; the lady Gambrana, with her sons; Villegas, with his daughters; and even their grandmother, besides several other married ladies. If I am not mistaken there was also Elvira Lopez, the tall, the wife of Juan Palma, who came with us to New Spain, but was subsequently condemned to the gallows; after which his widow married a certain Argueta. Of the number of gentlemen who came on this occasion, I remember a certain Antonio Diosdato, who settled in Guatimala.

On the first intelligence of their arrival, Sandoval left with most of the officers and several of the soldiers to pay his respects to these ladies, and to those by whom they were accompanied. I still remember how heavily it rained at the time, and the difficulty we experienced in crossing the rivers, which had all overflowed their banks; heavy gales were blowing from the north, and indeed it was from distress of weather that the vessel had put into that harbour. Donna Catalina and all the passengers were highly delighted at our arrival, and they immediately accompanied us back to Guacasualco, from whence Sandoval despatched a courier to Mexico to inform Cortes of the arrival of his wife; who, with the other ladies, soon after left for the same place, accompanied by Sandoval, Briones, Lugo, and other cavaliers.

It is said that Cortes was greatly vexed when he received intelligence of their arrival, though he did not show it, and even issued the necessary orders to give his wife a splendid reception. On the whole of her road to Mexico, as may be imagined, the greatest honours were paid to her, and when she arrived in the city itself all manner of

festivities and tournaments took place to welcome her arrival. But the joy of this excellent lady was of short duration, for scarcely three months had elapsed when we received intelligence of her death, from a violent asthma.

I must now relate what befel Villafuerta, who was sent out to colonize Zacatula, and Juan Alvarez Chico, who marched to Colima for a like purpose. Both of them had encountered the most obstinate resistance from the inhabitants, the whole of whom rose up in arms against them and killed several of their men. Cortes was excessively annoyed at the unfortunate termination of these expeditions; but as Oli happened to return about the same time from Mechoacan with a great quantity of gold, after having restored perfect tranquillity to that district, he looked upon him as the most likely man to subdue the provinces of Zacatula and Colima. He therefore despatched him thither as commander-in-chief with fifteen horse and thirty musketeers and crossbow-men.

When Oli had arrived within a short distance of Zacatula, a large body of the enemy suddenly fell upon his troops in a narrow pass, with great dexterity; killed two of his men and wounded several others; he nevertheless drove them back, and safely reached the town built by Villafuerta, which with the whole settlement he found in a miserable condition. No one durst stir out of the town to visit the townships which had been bestowed upon him as a commendary; for the inhabitants had already put four Spaniards to death who had attempted to collect their rents.

In all the provinces where Spanish settlements are formed, the chief colonists are presented with commendaries, and it is when these persons travel to the different townships to demand their tribute, that the inhabitants generally rise up in arms and murder every Spaniard they can seize. Christobal de Oli, therefore, had to fight many a severe battle before he could put down the insurrection, and he lost many of his men. What became of Juan Alvarez Chico, who had been sent to form settlements in Colima, I cannot exactly remember, though I think he was killed in one of the battles he fought with the natives.

After Oli, as he thought, had restored peace to the province, he returned to Mexico, he having a short time previously married a beautiful Portuguese lady, named Filipa de Araujo; but he had scarcely set foot in Mexico when he received intelligence that the two provinces, Zacatula and Colima had again risen up in arms. This happened just about the time when Sandoval reached Mexico with Cortes' wife, and our general thought it best to despatch Sandoval to these rebellious

provinces, though he could only furnish him with a few horse, and fifteen crossbow-men and musketeers; but every one of these men were of the original conquistadores, who made very short work with the rebels, punished two of the caziques of Colima, and completely quelled the rebellion, nor did the inhabitants ever after break out into hostilities. Sandoval was equally successful in Zacatula, so that he soon returned to Mexico.

We who were stationed at Guacasualco, had in the meantime also our work to do, for scarcely had Sandoval departed when most of the provinces in which our commendaries lay again revolted, and it was with great difficulty we at length succeeded in tranquillising the inhabitants. The first district which had rebelled was that part of Xaltepec lying among rugged and almost inaccessible mountains, inhabited by a tribe of the Tzapotecs; this example was followed by Cimatan and Copilco, which are situated between large rivers and morasses; and, within forty-eight miles of Guacasualco, a Spaniard had been murdered on his own property.

While the whole of us regidors, with the captain Luis Marin, and one of the alcaldes of the town were making arrangements for an expedition against the rebellious provinces, we were informed that a small vessel had run into the harbour, having on board Juan Bono de Quexo. This man said he came with authority from our emperor, we therefore determined to call upon him without delay to inquire the nature of his business.

This Bono had first arrived in New Spain with Narvaez, and thus he was well known to us all. After he had given each of us a hearty embrace, he desired us to call a council of the chief authorities of the town, that he might notify to them certain powers with which he was invested by his majesty, and lay before them the instructions he had received from the bishop of Burgos, from whom he brought letters for all of us. He was provided with a number of blank papers, with only the bishop's signature attached to them, which Juan Bono now filled up with the names of the regidors, accompanied by all manner of fine promises, according to the instructions he had received from the bishop; these appointments were to be presented to the proper persons mentioned therein, if we gave up possession of the country to Cristobal de Tapia. This Bono was not at all aware that Tapia had returned to St. Domingo; and the bishop had so little suspected that we should not have acknowledged the authority of Tapia, that he sent Bono after him with this commission. Among others, my name was also put down in one of these appointments, as regidor.

Bono did not disclose any part of his commission, or produce any of his papers, until we were all duly assembled in council; but as soon as he mentioned the nature of his business, we stopped any discussion on the matter, by telling him that Tapia himself had long ago left New Spain again, and we advised him to repair to Mexico, and lay his commission before Cortes.

When Bono, to his great surprise, found that Tapia had left the country, he became quite downcast, set sail the very next day for Vera Cruz, from whence he journeyed overland to Mexico. What passed between him and Cortes I do not know, but I understood that the latter supplied him with a certain sum of money to defray the expenses of his voyage back to Spain.

I could say a good deal of the numerous battles we fought, and of the great fatigues we underwent during our stay at Guacasualco, in putting down the frequent insurrections in the provinces; but it is high time I should relate something about the expedition of Alvarado to the province of Tutepec.

CHAPTER CLXI.

How Alvarado marches to the province of Tutepec, to build a town there; and how far he succeeded in subduing the country, and in founding a colony.

To give an account of Alvarado's expedition to the province of Tutepec, we must return to the period immediately following the conquest of Mexico. It will be remembered that after the news of the fall of that large city had spread through the provinces, ambassadors arrived from all parts to congratulate Cortes on this great victory over the Mexican power, and the different tribes declared themselves vassals of our emperor. Among the more powerful tribes which submitted on this occasion was that of the Tecuantepec—Tzapotecs, whose ambassadors brought with them a present in gold, stating at the same time that they were at war with their neighbours, the Tutepecs, who had commenced hostilities with them, because they had submitted to the Spanish crown. This tribe inhabited the coast on the South Sea, they added,—and possessed great quantities of gold, both in the raw material and in ornaments; they themselves now came to request Cortes to assist them against their enemies with some of his cavalry, musketeers, and cross-bow-men.

Cortes assured them, in a very affectionate manner, that he would send Tonatio (as they called Alvarado) with them. He accordingly despatched Alvarado thither with a considerable detachment, consisting of one hundred and eighty men, among whom there were thirty-five horse; and a further reinforcement of twenty men, most of whom were crossbow-men, would join him in the province of Guaxaca, where the captain Francisco de Orozco commanded in chief.

Alvarado left Mexico in the year 1522, and first of all marched to a mountainous district, where it was said disturbances had recently broken out; but he found all in profound peace here, and the inhabitants well disposed towards the Spaniards; nevertheless, he appears to have been very tardy in his movements, for he did not reach Tutepec until forty days after. The inhabitants, who had received intelligence of his approach, came out to meet him with every show of magnificence, and conducted him to the most populous of all their townships, where stood the temples and their largest buildings. The houses were very crowded, and made of straw, for in this excessively hot climate the dwellings have no upper stories, and are not built of stone. Father Olmedo here observed to Alvarado, that it would not be advisable to quarter the troops in the houses, for if the inhabitants were to take it into their heads to set fire to the town there would be no possibility of escape. Alvarado considered his apprehensions well founded, and encamped with his men at the extremity of the town. The cazique soon after arrived with a valuable present in gold, which he repeated almost every day, and provided the troops with abundance of provisions. When Alvarado found what a quantity of gold the inhabitants possessed, he ordered them to make him a pair of stirrups of the finest gold, and gave them a couple of his own for a pattern; and indeed those they made turned out very good.

Notwithstanding all the gold which Alvarado received from this cazique, he ordered him to be imprisoned a few days after his arrival, as the people of Tecuantepec had assured him that the whole province was upon the eve of rising up in arms against him, and that the chiefs of Tutepec had only invited him to quarter his troops in the large houses in the heart of their town, that they might set fire to them, and burn him, with all his men, to death.

Many credible persons have asserted that Alvarado's only motive for ill using this cazique was, to extort more gold from him; one thing, however, is certain, that he gave Alvarado gold to the value of 30,000 pesos, and that he died in prison from excessive grief. Father Olmedo indeed strove to give him every consolation in his last days, but all his

endeavours proved fruitless; melancholy had sunk too deeply into his heart. The caziquedom then devolved upon his son, from whom Alvarado extorted even more gold than from the father.

Alvarado then sent a small detachment of his troops to visit the other townships of the province, and distributed these among the settlers of the new town which he founded, to which he gave the name of Segura, because most of the new inhabitants had formerly settled in the town of Segura de la Frontera, or Tepeaca. After he had done all this, he ordered the vast quantity of gold he had collected from the townships to be securely packed, in order that he might take it with him to Mexico, and hand it over to Cortes; for he pretended that the latter had desired him to collect all the gold he possibly could, as it was to be forwarded to his majesty, to make up for the loss of that which Jean Florin had carried off to France; and that he had received particular instructions from our general not to divide any of it among the men who accompanied him on this expedition. When Alvarado was about to make preparations for his departure, a certain portion of his troops, mostly musketeers and crossbow-men, formed a conspiracy to put him and his brothers to death, because he had refused, after their repeated solicitations, to give them any share of the gold, or to distribute among them any very lucrative Indian townships.

This plot was fortunately discovered to father Olmedo by one of the conspirators, named Trebijo, the evening preceding the night on which the bloody deed was to have been carried out. Father Olmedo instantly communicated what he had heard to Alvarado, who was about to start, in company of some of the conspirators, to go a hunting. Alvarado therefore pretended to be taken with a sudden pain in his side, and turning to those who were to have accompanied him, he said, "Gentlemen, I must return to my quarters; let a barber immediately come to bleed me."

As soon as Alvarado had arrived in his quarters he sent for his brothers Jorge and Gonzalo Gomez, with the alcaldes and alguacils; he then ordered the conspirators to be seized, and two of them, after a short trial, were sentenced to the gallows. One of these men was a certain Salamanca, of Condado, who had formerly been a pilot; the other was Bernardino Levantisco, and both of them died like good Christians, after father Olmedo had fully convinced them of the enormity of their crime. This example of severity brought the remaining conspirators to their proper senses; so that Alvarado was enabled to depart with the gold for Mexico without any fear.

Alvarado had certainly laid the foundation of a new town, but it soon

fell to nothing again; for the settlers had obtained very poor lands; the climate was excessively hot, and very unhealthy; many of the Spaniards soon fell ill, and the Indian naborias and slaves whom they had brought with them died away very fast. The place swarmed with moschitoes, mice, and even lice;—to which was added, that Alvarado had carried off all the gold. The inhabitants therefore determined to leave the new town, and to settle elsewhere; so that they soon dispersed, and some returned to Mexico, some settled in Guaxaca, and others in Guatimala. When Cortes received intelligence of this, he instituted a formal inquiry into all the circumstances, and it was found that the determination to abandon the new town had been agreed upon in a council held by the alcaldes and regidors of the place. Sentence of death was then pronounced against the guilty personages; but father Olmedo begged so hard of Cortes to mitigate this severe sentence, that the latter at length, though very reluctantly, yielded to his prayers, and altered the sentence into that of banishment.

Such was the ill-fated termination of the colony of Tutepec, which never after rose again, for every one feared the unhealthy climate, though the country was uncommonly rich. When the inhabitants, who could not forget Alvarado's cruel and unjust treatment, saw that all the Spaniards were leaving, they revolted anew, which obliged Alvarado to return, and he again forced them to lay down their arms and to sue for peace.

CHAPTER CLXII.

How Francisco de Garay arrives with an extensive armament in the river Panuco; how far he was successful; and of many other circumstances.

I HAVE above mentioned that Francisco de Garay was governor of Jamaica, and that he already possessed great wealth, when he heard of the rich countries we had discovered in our expeditions under Cordoba and Grijalva, and of the 20,000 pesos with which we returned to Cuba on our second voyage.

When he therefore received information of a new armament that was destined for New Spain, under command of Hernando Cortes, he himself was seized with a great desire likewise to discover some new countries, and certainly he had more wealth at his command than we had, to fit out an armament for such a purpose. He had learnt a good deal about

the new countries from our old chief pilot Alaminos; of their riches, and how thickly populated the provinces were on the river Panuco; and as several other sailors who had accompanied us on those expeditions, confirmed what Alaminos had told him, he thought it worth his while to request his majesty to grant him the permission to make further discoveries on the river Panuco, and to appoint him governor of all the lands he should discover. For this purpose he despatched his majordomo, Juan de Torralva, to Spain, with letters and presents for those gentlemen who at that time governed the affairs of India, begging of them to procure him the appointment above mentioned.

His Majesty was at that time in Flanders, and the president of the council of the Indies, Don Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca, bishop of Burgos and titular archbishop of Rosano, with the two licentiates Zapata and Vargas, and the secretary Lopez de Conchillos, governed the affairs of India just as they thought proper. Garay therefore easily obtained the appointment of adelantado and governor of the provinces bordering on the river St. Peter and St. Paul, and of all the countries he should discover.

By virtue of this appointment he fitted out three vessels, having on board 240 men; including a strong body of cavalry, crossbowmen, and musketeers. The chief command of this armament he gave to Alonso Alvarez Pinedo, who, as I have above mentioned, was soon cut off, with the greater part of his men, by the Indians, so that there was only one vessel with sixty men that escaped to Vera Cruz, who, with their captain, Comargo, entered our army.

Garay, being ignorant of the miserable termination of this expedition, sent out two more vessels, under command of Diaz de Auz and Ramirez, with many soldiers, horses, a quantity of provisions, and a considerable store of arms of various kinds; but when these vessels arrived in the river Panuco, and nowhere met with any traces of the other armament, excepting a few pieces of burnt wood of the first vessels, lying on the shore, they likewise put into Vera Cruz. Though I have mentioned all this above, it was nevertheless necessary to recapitulate these circumstances here, to render the whole more intelligible to the reader.

After Garay had thus spent so much money to no purpose, and heard of the great good fortune which attended Cortes; of the large towns he had discovered, and of the vast treasures in gold and jewels which he had accumulated in New Spain, envy, as well as thirst for riches, also rose up in his breast to torment him; and he was resolved to fit out as extensive an armament as he possibly could, and to take the command of it himself. He accordingly equipped a small fleet, consisting

of eleven vessels and two brigantines, on board of which there were 130 horse and 840 foot, most of the latter being armed with muskets and crossbows. As he was a man of great wealth, he spared no expense in fitting out this splendid armament. With this fleet Garay left Jamaica in the month of June, of the year 1523, sailed in the direction of Cuba, and thence ran into the harbour of Xagua, where he learnt that Cortes had already subdued the whole province of Panuco; that he had founded a colony there, and that the expedition had cost him above 60,000 pesos; that he had petitioned his majesty to unite the government of this province with that of New Spain, and to appoint him the viceroy. This of itself was disheartening to Garay; but when he further heard of the heroic deeds of Cortes and his companions, and how we with a mere handful of men had gained the victory over Narvaez, although he had an army of 1300 men, besides eighteen heavy guns, he began to fear the good fortune of our general. His apprehensions were further augmented by what he heard from several distinguished personages of Cuba, who had come to pay their respects to him at Xagua; among these was also the licentiate Zuazo, whom the royal court of audience at St. Domingo had expressly sent to Cuba, to reside near Diego Velasquez. From the different interviews which Garay had with Zuazo, he soon foresaw that, if he proceeded to Panuco, he would have to dispute its possession with Cortes; he therefore proposed to Zuazo that he should accompany him thither, and act as a mediator between himself and Cortes. To this Zuazo replied, that he was not at liberty to leave his present abode without permission from his superiors, but that he would follow him as soon as possible.

Garay then weighed anchor and sailed in the direction of Panuco. He encountered very boisterous weather at sea, so that he was driven too far north off the mouth of the river Palmas, which he entered with his fleet on the day of Santiago de Compostella. Here he sent several of his officers, with a small detachment of his troops, on shore, who returned with so bad an account of the country that Garay determined to leave this place and go in search of the river Panuco, and to repair to the town Cortes had founded, where, at the same time, he would be nearer to Mexico. Upon this, Garay again required the whole of the officers and soldiers to take the oath of fidelity, and to promise implicit obedience to him as captain-general. He likewise appointed the alcaldes, the regidors, with all the chief authorities of a town he intended to found, and to which he said he would give the name of Garayana. He now disembarked the whole of his men and horses, and gave the command of the fleet to an officer named Grijalva,

whom he ordered to sail as close as possible to the shore, while he marched with his troops along the coast. The first two days he passed over a desolate and boggy country; he then crossed a river, which took its source in the mountains, lying about twenty miles inland, and arrived in a township which was quite deserted by its inhabitants, but where he found abundance of maise and fowls, besides the delicious fruit of the guayaba tree. The soldiers likewise brought in a few of the inhabitants prisoners, who understood the Mexican language; and Garay, after making them handsome presents, sent them to the neighbouring townships to incline the inhabitants peaceably towards him. He then marched round a large morass, and visited several townships, everywhere meeting with the kindest reception from the inhabitants, who brought him quantities of fowls, and a species of geese which they catch among the swamps. Many of his men had by this time become wearied of marching up and down the country; and having got it into their heads that the officers withheld from them some kinds of the provisions which the inhabitants brought in, a part of the troops rebelled, and plundered these townships for three days successively. On the fourth day, the whole of the troops again marched forward, with some Indian guides, and arrived at a very broad river, which they had no other means of crossing but by canoes which were furnished them by the friendly townships just mentioned. The horses were obliged to swim across, each rider in a canoe leading his horse by the bridle; but as there were a considerable number of horses, it was a very tedious business, and five were unfortunately drowned. At length the whole of the troops had passed across, but they had to encounter another formidable morass, through which they found their way after undergoing many fatigues, and so reached the province of Panuco. Here Garay expected to have found provisions in abundance; but the whole of the townships had scarcely any food left for themselves, while the inhabitants were still in a very excited state, owing to the recent incursion which Cortes had made into this neighbourhood; and wherever there were any provisions left, the Indians took care to hide them as soon as they received information of the approach of so large a body of troops and horses; indeed they even totally deserted their towns, so that in the very place where Garay had thought to rest and refresh his troops, he only encountered greater difficulties and fatigues. In the deserted houses his men found nothing but mice, moschitoes, and lice, which made an unmerciful attack upon the new comers. To all this misery was added, that the fleet, which should have sailed close into the shore, and on board of which there was abundance of food, had not arrived

in the harbour, nor had any tidings of it been received. The information with respect to the non-arrival of the vessels was given them by a Spaniard, who, on account of some misdemeanor or other, had been obliged to quit the town of Santisteban del Puerto. This man likewise informed Garay's men that there was a town not far off, and also that the Mexican territory was not very distant, which, he added, was amazingly fertile, and inhabited by wealthy personages. This account greatly excited the men, so that they began to stroll about the country in small bodies, plundered every place they came to, and took the road leading to Mexico.

Garay, who was well acquainted with the turbulent spirit of his troops, and fearing he should not be able to keep them much longer together, despatched Diego de Ocampo, one of his chief officers, with a letter to Pedro Vallejo, who was at that time Cortes' commandant of Santisteban, to learn which way he was inclined. In this letter Garay informed Vallejo that he had been appointed by his majesty governor of these provinces; that he had disembarked his troops in the river Palmas; and that at last, after undergoing excessive fatigues, he had reached the land of his destination.

Vallejo gave Ocampo and those who accompanied him a very honorable reception, answered in the most polite terms, and assured him Cortes would be delighted to have for neighbour so distinguished a governor; but he told him that he had expended a large sum of money in subjecting this province, of which he also had been appointed governor by his majesty. Garay, however, was at liberty, continued Vallejo, to march his troops into the town of Santisteban whenever he thought proper, and he would render him every service in his power; only he must beg of him not to allow his men to ill use the Indian population, of which two townships had already complained to him.

Vallejo then sent an express to Cortes, inclosing Garay's letter to him, and gave him at the same time a circumstantial account of the posture of affairs, adding, that he must either send him a strong reinforcement of troops, or repair in person to Santisteban.

Cortes, on the receipt of Vallejo's letter, sent for father Olmedo, Alvarado, Sandoval, and Gonzalo de Ocampo, brother to him whom Garay had despatched to Vallejo. These gentlemen he instantly sent off to Garay with certain papers containing his appointment of governor of all the countries he might subdue, granted to him by his majesty, until the lawsuit should have terminated which was pending between him (Cortes) and the governor of Cuba. The answer which Vallejo had given to Diego de Ocampo was perfectly satisfactory to Garay, and he

marched his troops close up to the town of Santisteban; but Vallejo being informed that a small detachment of the latter was strolling heedlessly about the large and beautiful township of Nechaplan, he sent out a body of his own men to attack them, who captured above forty of their numbers, and brought them in prisoners to Santisteban, which, it appears, was the very thing these men had desired. Garay was greatly incensed at this, demanded Vallejo to deliver up the men to him again, and threatened, unless he complied, to punish him by virtue of the royal authority with which he was vested. Vallejo, however, answered, that his reason for seizing these men was, because they were marching about the country without any legal authority, and had plundered the inhabitants: and that he (Vallejo) should act up to Cortes' instructions until he received some especial command from his majesty to the contrary; adding, that he must again request him not to allow his men to plunder and ill treat his majesty's subjects.

While this dispute was going on, father Olmedo, with Alvarado and the other officers, arrived in Santisteban; and as Gonzalo de Ocampo was at that time alcalde major of Mexico, it was his duty to give Garay notice to quit that territory, of which the government had been conferred upon Cortes by his majesty. Several days were spent in these negotiations, which were carried on by word of mouth, between the two parties, by father Olmedo, and Garay began to discover that numbers of his men deserted to Vallejo, that Cortes' officers were accompanied by a considerable body of horse and musketeers, and that they daily increased in numbers. Two of his vessels had been lost in a heavy storm, and the rest lay at anchor in the mouth of the harbour, and were summoned by Vallejo to run in, otherwise he should be obliged to treat them as corsairs; to which the captains replied, that it was no business of his where they anchored their vessels, and he might keep his commands to himself.

Garay, who greatly feared the good fortune which always attended Cortes' arms, durst not take any decisive step; while, on the other hand, Ocampo of Mexico, Alvarado, and Sandoval were carrying on their secret negotiations with his troops, but particularly with the captains of the vessels, with some of whom they came to a secret understanding that they should run into the harbour and declare for Cortes. The first two captains who ran in with their vessels were Martin Lepuzcuano and Castromucho, and they surrendered to Vallejo, who then immediately repaired to the mouth of the harbour with the two vessels, and commanded Juan de Grijalva either to run into the harbour or to quit his present station without delay and put to sea again.

This message Grijalva answered by firing a broadside at him; but Vallejo was not to be daunted by this, and repaired on board Grijalva's vessel in one of his own boats, accompanied by a royal secretary, and handed over to him letters from Alvarado and father Olmedo, who made large promises to him in the name of Cortes. While Grijalva was perusing these letters, the rest of the vessels ran one after the other into the harbour, so that no other resource was left him than to follow their example, and to yield up his sword to Vallejo, who had demanded it of him in the name of Cortes, though he, with all the other captains, were immediately set at liberty again, according to the advice of father Olmedo, who always said it was most pleasing to God and to our emperor when disputes were settled without spilling any blood.

When Garay found what a miserable state his affairs were in, that a portion of his men had deserted, and that the rest had rebelled against him; how two of his vessels had foundered at sea, and the rest had declared for Cortes, his despondency was at its height. He earnestly requested Cortes' officers to deliver up to him again his troops and his vessels, and declared that he would return to the river Palmas, and thus put an end to all further disputes. These officers, in reply, wished him every success in this undertaking, and said they would order all his men who were strolling about the country to repair to his standard again, and reembark with their general; they promised also to furnish him with a good supply of provisions and other matters. Garay was highly delighted with this offer, and the strictest orders were accordingly issued to seize all the men who had rebelled, and to take them into the presence of Garay: but all threats proved fruitless, and the few of Garay's soldiers who were recaptured maintained that their agreement was to serve in the province of Panuco, and that their oath did not bind them to follow their general's standard anywhere else. They even used stronger language than this; and declared, without any reserve, that Garay did not possess the requisite talents for a commander, and that he was altogether no soldier.

When Garay found that, notwithstanding all his remonstrances and threats, he could not alter the minds of his men, he completely despaired. Our officers then advised him to write to Cortes, and they promised to use all their influence with the latter, and induce him to assist Garay in his expedition to the river Palmas; indeed, father Olmedo and Alvarado pledged their words to obtain this for him. Garay accordingly wrote a letter to our general, in which he gave him an account of his voyage, and of the fatigues he had undergone, then begged his permission to visit him in Mexico, in order that they might come to

some understanding with each other, and consider what steps they could take to promote his majesty's best interests in this matter. Father Olmedo and our officers also wrote to Cortes, and strongly recommended Garay's cause to him, adding, that he was a gentleman with whom he had formerly lived on the most intimate terms of friendship.

When Cortes read Garay's letter, he could not help feeling excessively grieved at his misfortunes, and sent him a most polite answer in return, expressing his deep concern at the unfortunate position of his affairs, and invited him to repair in person to Mexico, where he would feel happy to aid him with his counsel, and otherwise to lend him every assistance in his power to prosecute his further designs. Cortes then despatched orders for the inhabitants of the towns through which Garay would have to pass, to give him an hospitable reception, and even sent various kinds of refreshments for him to the different stages along his route. In Tezcuco a banquet was prepared in his honour, and when he had approached to within a short distance of Mexico, Cortes went out to meet him, accompanied by several officers.

Garay was not a little astonished when he beheld the many large towns, and at length the city of Mexico itself. Cortes gave him his own new palace to live in, and immediately began to converse with him about the posture of his affairs, and to deliberate what further steps it would be most advisable for him to adopt. Alvarado, Sandoval, and father Olmedo used their utmost influence with Cortes to further Garay's views; and the latter had scarcely been four days in Mexico when father Olmedo, in order to substantiate the good understanding which had arisen between him and Cortes, brought about the preliminaries of a marriage between a natural daughter of the latter, who was still very young, and the son of Garay.

It was at length settled that Garay should continue commander-in-chief of his fleet, and that he should colonize the country on the river Palmas, for which purpose Cortes was to furnish him with everything that was necessary, and even with officers and men. It was also agreed that Cortes should give a very large sum of money as a marriage portion to his daughter.

By these bright prospects and the friendly disposition which Cortes evinced towards him, Garay's spirits were again raised, and I am sure that everything would have been fulfilled as agreed upon between them, if Providence had not disposed otherwise.

Garay soon after inhabited the house of Alonso Villanueva, as Cortes was making great alterations in his palaces. This Villanueva had upon one occasion been despatched by Cortes to purchase horses

in Jamaica, but really I am unable to say whether previous or subsequent to this time; at all events, Garay and he were very intimate friends, wherefore he had requested permission of Cortes to inhabit the latter's house.

Narvaez was still in Mexico at this time, and renewed his former friendship with Garay. As may naturally be supposed, each related to the other his misfortunes, and as Narvaez was a man of a haughty disposition, he said smilingly to Garay on one occasion: "What very fine things, Señor Adelantado, have been told me by several of the men who have deserted your troops! They assert, that on every occasion when you wished to encourage your officers you used to say: 'We must show ourselves brave men and fight valiantly about with Cortes' soldiers, and not allow ourselves to be cozened as Narvaez was.' But what say you now, Señor? I lost one of my eyes in the battle I fought with Cortes; lost my army and all my property in the courageous defence which I offered, and indeed it was no joke to defeat me. No one in the world can have greater luck than this man; but it must be remembered that he has officers and soldiers who lend him the most vigorous assistance in all his undertakings, which alone has rendered it possible for him to have the good fortune of an Octavius, the victorious career of a Julius Cæsar, and the endurance of a Hannibal in battle."

To which Garay replied, "That it was unnecessary for him to mention all this, for the deeds spoke for themselves;" and indeed, added he, "where will you find another man who would dare, after destroying his fleet, to penetrate with a handful of men in the midst of a country so thickly populated, in order to wage war against powerful states and large cities?"

Narvaez then mentioned other heroic deeds of our general, and in this way they discoursed for a length of time with each other about the wonderful conquest of New Spain! Garay, soon after, even begged Cortes to grant Narvaez and his wife permission to return to the island of Cuba. This lady, whose name was Maria Valenzuela, possessed great wealth, and she had formerly known Cortes at Cuba, and was even related to him. She had herself also petitioned Cortes to liberate her husband. Our general now not only granted this request, but also gave Narvaez 2000 pesos to defray the expenses of his voyage. Narvaez could scarcely find words to thank Cortes sufficiently for so much kindness, and promised him, by everything that was holy, never under any circumstance whatever to go against his interests.

But to return to Garay, whose unfortunate expedition terminated in

the following manner. On Christmas eve of the year 1523 he accompanied Cortes to church in order to attend midnight mass, performed by father Olmedo; after church they both returned home in high spirits and sat down to breakfast, when it appears that Garay, who was not in very good health, caught cold by standing in a draught, which ended in pleurisy, accompanied by a violent fever. The medical men bled and purged him, but the disease continually grew worse, so that father Olmedo was desired to inform him of the danger he was in, that he might confess, while he was yet able, and make his last will. Father Olmedo accordingly disclosed to him that his end was drawing nigh, and he ought to think of preparing for death as a good Christian and an honest cavalier, that he might not lose his soul in the next world, as he had his riches in this. "Your advice is good, father," answered Garay; "I wish to confess this very night, to receive the holy sacrament, and to make my last will." All this he fulfilled with great devotion, appointed Cortes with father Olmedo his executors, and four days after rendered up his soul again to his God and his Creator.

It is peculiar to the climate of Mexico that those who are attacked by pleurisy, generally die within three or four days; this we experienced to our great sorrow in Tezcuco and Cojohuacan, where we lost numbers of our men from this disease. For the rest, every honour was paid to the last remains of Garay; and Cortes, with several officers, put on mourning. May his soul rest in peace. Amen! It is, however, to be regretted that he died far away from his wife and family in the house of a stranger. After his departure from Mexico pretty work was going on with his troops in Panuco; for as the officers and soldiers had no commander-in-chief, any one who got it into his head raised himself to captain or general, and in this way there stood successively at the head of the troops, Juan Grijalva, Gonzalo de Figueroa, Alonso de Mendoza, Lorenzo de Ulloa, Juan Medina, Juan de Villa, Antonio de la Cada, and a certain Taborda, who was the most rebellious of all. Garay's son, to whom Cortes' daughter was betrothed, nominally indeed, had the chief command, but the men troubled themselves very little about him; and they dispersed themselves in small bodies of fifteen and twenty-five about the country, plundered the townships, forcibly carried away the women, and in every respect conducted themselves as if they were plundering among the Moors. At last the inhabitants were resolved to suffer this no longer, and they united in a body with the determination to destroy these cruel invaders, and in the space of a few days they killed upwards of 500

Spaniards, all of Garay's troops, the most of whom were sacrificed to their gods and their flesh was devoured. In one township alone, above one hundred were slaughtered in this way. Cortes' troops in Santisteban were no longer able to quell these disturbances, nor did the Indians any way fear them; for when the garrison had upon one occasion marched out against them, they defended themselves so valiantly that our troops were obliged to retreat back to the town, to which the Indians had even the temerity to lay siege, and made repeated attacks upon it both day and night, and they would certainly have taken it if there had not been seven or eight of the veteran conquistadores among the garrison, who, with Vallejo, continually spurred on the rest of the men, and took every military precaution to prevent so terrible a disaster. These determined men also lent every assistance they could to the rest of Garay's troops, but at the same time showed the necessity of their continuing to encamp outside the town, so as to prevent the enemy from making a combined attack upon the latter. Three separate engagements were fought between the Indians and the troops of Vallejo, joined to those of Garay, and though the former was killed himself and many Spaniards wounded, yet the Indians were each time defeated with considerable loss. The inhabitants had altogether become so furious and exasperated, that on one occasion during night-time they burnt alive in one of their towns forty Spaniards and fifteen horses.

When Cortes received intelligence of this terrible state of things he felt excessively annoyed, and was upon the point of marching himself to Panuco at the head of his troops to quell these disturbances, but he was still suffering from the consequences of a broken arm, so that he was compelled to leave this to Sandoval, whom he instantly despatched thither with one hundred foot, fifty horse, fifteen crossbow-men and musketeers, two cannon, and a body of 10,000 Tlascallan and Mexican auxiliaries. Sandoval's instructions were to punish the inhabitants in such a manner as to discourage them from ever after breaking out into rebellion. As Sandoval was a man who could not rest night or day whenever he had any important business on hand, he never stayed a moment longer in any place than was absolutely necessary. Having received intelligence that the enemy had stationed the whole of their troops in two narrow passes, he divided his men into two bodies, of which one was to attack the first and the other the second pass. The crossbow-men and musketeers were instructed to keep up a constant fire upon the enemy, who, however, bid a stout resistance in their turn, and wounded several of the Spanish and auxiliary troops. When

Sandoval found that all his attempts to force the first pass were fruitless, and having no better fortune on the following day, he sent orders for the other body, which had been equally unsuccessful at the second pass, to turn back upon the road leading to Mexico, he himself drawing off his men in the same direction. The enemy, who imagined he retreated from fear, likewise quitted their position, and followed Sandoval with terrific yells. The latter now encamped in a secure spot, where he remained quiet for three days; and one midnight, when he thought the enemy less upon their guard, he suddenly broke up his camp, and, with the cavalry in advance, forced his way through the narrow passes, with the whole of his troops; but even then it was with great difficulty he succeeded, and three of his horses were killed, besides numbers of the troops wounded: however, as soon as he had the advantage ground, he fell with great impetuosity upon the enemy, who had received considerable reinforcements during the night. So vastly had their numbers increased, that he began to entertain serious doubts as to the issue of the battle; he therefore firmly closed his ranks, and so continued to combat with the enemy, who rushed upon the points of the swords with the savage ferocity of so many tigers, and they even succeeded to wrest the lances from six of the less experienced cavalry soldiers. Sandoval was terribly enraged at this latter circumstance, and swore he would rather go to battle with a few men who knew how to fight, than with a great number who did not: and he then instructed the cavalry how to aim at the enemy's face; and if the Indians grasped the lances, to hold them firmly with the hand placed under the arm, give spurs to the horses, and, by a sudden jerk, wrest the lance from the enemy's grasp, or drag him along with it.

After this battle, in which neither party had gained any advantage over the other, Sandoval encamped for the night near a small river. Here he carefully posted his watches, and, having been taught experience in our battles with the Mexicans, he ordered his auxiliary troops to encamp at a good distance from the Spanish, to avoid all confusion if the enemy commenced the attack in the dark. Sandoval had indeed every reason to suppose that the Indians would fall upon him in the night, for they had taken up a position so very near to his camp that their warwhoop and military music were quite audible; but they made so sure of victory, they said, (as Sandoval learnt from his auxiliaries,) that they would rather wait till morning, and then put him, with all his men, to the sword.

As soon as daylight broke forth, Sandoval marched out, with the whole of his troops in close order, towards some houses whence the

nemy's war-music resounded. He had scarcely proceeded a mile when he came up with three large bodies of the enemy, who immediately began to hem him in on all sides. Sandoval, observing this, placed half of his cavalry in each wing, and attacked the enemy with such determination that he completely routed them, and slew great numbers. Two Spaniards, who had but recently come to New Spain, were killed in this battle, besides three horses. The Mexicans and Tlascallans then spread themselves through the different townships, killed several more of the enemy, set fire to every place, and brought in great numbers of prisoners.

The road to Santisteban was now open, and when Sandoval arrived there he found the garrison in a most deplorable condition: greater part of the troops were either sick or wounded, but what was worse, they had neither food for themselves nor their horses.

The reader may easily imagine how welcome Sandoval's arrival was, and he soon learnt how Garay's troops had behaved, and how the garrison would probably have been cut to pieces if it had not been for the assistance of seven or eight veteran Conquistadores, who each day marched to the field of battle, kept Garay's troops outside the city, and so occupied the enemy's attention in another quarter that they did not even allow them time to think of storming the town. Sandoval then embraced these brave men, and gave to each of the Conquistadores, who were all his old companions in arms, a separate command, and desired them to divide all the foot and cavalry into two bodies, and so sally out of the town, forage the country round, damage the enemy's property as much as possible, and bring in as many prisoners as they could take, particularly of the chiefs. He himself, to his great sorrow, was obliged to remain behind, as he was severely wounded in the leg, and had been struck in the face by a stone.

The two detachments obeyed his commands in every respect; they soon brought in a quantity of maise and other provisions, with several women, a number of poor people, and five chiefs who had fought in the recent battles. Sandoval ordered all these prisoners to be released, with the exception of the five last mentioned, and ordered his troops not to bring in any other prisoners excepting those who had had a hand in the murder of the Spaniards. The rest of the inhabitants they were to encourage to approach the town peaceably, and to live on terms of friendship with the Spaniards.

Several officers of distinction belonging to Garay's troops, who had done their worst to create the insurrection in this province, had remained behind in the town on this last occasion. These gentle-

men, whose names I have mentioned above, considered themselves grossly insulted when they found that Sandoval had not intrusted them with any command, but had selected the veteran Conquistadores. They therefore began to murmur and to inveigh bitterly against the dispositions which Sandoval had made, and even spoke to Garay's son of making common cause with the inhabitants, and of revolutionizing the province. After Sandoval had regarded their intrigues in silence for some time, he at length addressed these discontented personages to the following effect: "Instead, gentlemen, of being thankful to me for having marched into this province to your assistance, and for rescuing you from the imminent danger in which you lived, you have, I hear, thrown out language against me which little becomes cavaliers of your stamp. It is no dishonour to you that I put those in command who have proved themselves able officers. I should, indeed, have been a fool had I not done so; and if you had shown yourselves equally deserving, I should not have forgotten you: but I should like to know whether you showed any fitness to command when you allowed yourselves to be hemmed in on all sides by the Indians. You yourselves have unanimously declared that you would have been on the brink of destruction had it not been for the eight veteran Conquistadores; it is for this reason, and because they are acquainted with the country, that I intrusted them with the command. These jealousies never entered our mind when we were besieging Mexico; our only thoughts were how we should best be able to promote his majesty's interests. Follow, therefore, our example for the future. I do not intend staying much longer here, for I must soon return to Mexico, if, at least, these Indians do not kill me; but he whom I shall leave behind as Cortes' commandant of this town will not allow you much leisure time; therefore, moderate your anger, and learn to judge better of me in future!" Here Sandoval ended, but all he said produced very little effect.

The following day Sandoval marched out with the whole of his troops, and made so excellent a disposition of his men, that he captured above twenty caziques who had all been concerned in the massacre of Garay's troops and of several other Spaniards belonging to the colony. He then invited all the townships to send him messengers of peace, which they accordingly did, with the exception of a few. After this, he forwarded an account to Cortes of every circumstance, and requested to know what course he was to adopt with the prisoners, and whom he should appoint commandant of Santisteban in the room of Vallejo; nor did he omit to mention the courage and skill which the eight veterans above mentioned had throughout displayed.

Cortes received this letter just at the moment when he was surrounded by a great number of the old Conquistadores, and by several Spaniards who had recently arrived from Spain. He was highly delighted to find that Sandoval had so speedily quelled the disturbances, and exclaimed aloud, in the presence of all, "O! Sandoval, how much am I not indebted to you, and what vast fatigues do you not undergo for me?" Every person present joined in the praise of Sandoval, declaring unanimously that he was a most excellent officer, and might be compared with the most renowned captains of any age.

Cortes, in answer to Sandoval's letter, told him that those of the Indians who had been guilty of the murder of so many Spaniards, and had wantonly killed so great a number of horses, were to be tried and punished according to law; for which purpose he would despatch to him the alcalde major Diego de Ocampo, who would investigate the matter in due form. The remaining part of the population he was to treat with every possible kindness, and strictly to forbid the troops of Garay or any other Spaniards to plunder or in anywise to ill use the inhabitants.

Sandoval was vastly pleased when Ocampo arrived, who, without delay, brought the Indian caziques and chiefs to trial; and, as they themselves confessed they had had a hand in the murder of the Spaniards above mentioned, they were found guilty, and some were sentenced to be hung, some to be burnt alive, and others were liberated altogether. The sons and brothers of those who had been sentenced to death were appointed to the vacant caziquedoms, according to their respective rightful claims.

Here Ocampo's business did not end, for he was likewise empowered by Cortes to institute inquiries against those of Garay's troops who had strolled about the country like so many banditti, and thereby caused the insurrection among the Indian population. The whole of these fellows Ocampo put on board one of the vessels, and sent them to the island of Cuba. Grijalva he left the choice, by command of Cortes, either to accept of 2000 pesos, which would instantly be paid down to him, and sail with the others to Cuba, or to repair to Mexico and enter the service of Cortes, by which he would benefit himself and be raised to high honours; but he, with the whole of them, chose rather to return to Cuba, where the greater part had Indian commendaries. This vessel was therefore well victualled, and sailed under the command of a certain Vallecillo for the last-mentioned island.

Ocampo and Sandoval, upon this, returned to Mexico, where they were splendidly received by Cortes and the whole town; and the joy

at Sandoval's triumphant return was the greater, as every one had entertained doubts as to the probable issue of this campaign. Father Olmedo even proposed a day of thanksgiving, which was accordingly celebrated in the church of our dear Lady. For the rest, this province ever after remained very tranquil and obedient.

CHAPTER CLXIII.

How the licentiate Zuazo set sail for New Spain in a small vessel, accompanied by two monks of the order of Charity; and their remarkable adventures on this voyage.

I MENTIONED in a former chapter that the licentiate Zuazo promised Garay, during the few days he stayed at Cuba, that he would repair in person to Mexico, and try to settle the differences between him and Cortes. He had first wished to render an account to the royal court of audience at St. Domingo of his administration of justice in the island of Cuba, after which he really set sail for New Spain. On this voyage he took along with him two monks of the order of Charity, one of whom was named Juan Varillas, and the other Gonzalo Pondevedra. The former was a native of Salamanca, and a most intimate friend of father Olmedo, to visit whom he had purposely asked permission of his superiors, and had been staying some time at Cuba with father Gonzalo to await a favorable opportunity of crossing over to New Spain. As he was a relation of Zuazo, he begged he would allow father Gonzalo and himself to accompany him on this occasion. This Zuazo readily granted, and they both accordingly embarked with him in a small vessel. They had scarcely doubled the cape of Sant Anton, (which is also called the land of Gamatabeis, a wild tribe of Indians whom the Spaniards have not yet subdued,) when, either through ignorance of the pilot or owing to heavy currents, they were driven out of their right course, and were wrecked off the Viboras isles, which lie between the shallows near the so termed Alacranes sands. When large vessels get aground here, they are inevitably lost; whereas the smallness of Zuazo's vessel was the very means of his preservation. Yet, in order to lighten the vessel, they were obliged to throw a great part of the cargo overboard, which, as it principally consisted of smoked meat, soon brought great numbers of sharks about the vessel. One of the sailors, who had ventured with some others into the shallow water, was seized and devoured by one of these monsters; the rest would, no doubt, have shared a similar

fate if they had not immediately hastened on board again. It was, therefore, with great difficulty and much risk the whole of the crew at length managed to get on to the island; but as they had thrown all their provisions and their water-casks overboard, they had at first nothing to eat or drink; at length, indeed, they managed to fish up a few pieces of their smoked meat from the sea. They would even have been without fire had it not been for two Cuba Indians, who, by rubbing two pieces of dry wood together, soon kindled a flame. After searching about for some time, they likewise had the good fortune to meet with fresh water; and as the island was small and very sandy, numbers of turtles came to lay their eggs in the sand. These creatures, which they found would lay one hundred eggs each, the two Indians of Cuba easily captured by turning them on their backs, so that they were unable to move. With these eggs, the flesh of the turtle, and of seals which came on land during the night, thirteen people nourished themselves for many days.

Among the hands on board this small vessel there happened to be two carpenters of Ribera, who had fortunately rescued their tools; it was therefore determined that they should construct a boat from the timber of the vessel. When they had finished and completely rigged this boat, a supply of turtles and smoked seals' flesh, with some water, was put on board, besides a sea-chart and a compass. With this frail bark, three Spanish sailors, and one of the Cuba Indians, boldly put out to sea in quest of some harbour of New Spain, whence they might send a vessel to the rescue of those left on the island. After encountering various kinds of weather, they at length arrived safe in the river Bandera, where at that time goods were landed from Spain. The three Spaniards immediately repaired to Medellin, where a certain Simon de Cuenca was Cortes' commandant, to whom they related their unfortunate shipwreck off the Viboras isles. Cuenca, on hearing this, fitted out a small vessel, which he despatched thither with a letter to Zuazo, in which he told him how pleased Cortes would be to hear of his arrival in New Spain. Cortes, to whom Cuenca had sent information of this circumstance, highly commended the conduct he had pursued, and desired him, as soon as Zuazo and his companions should arrive, to provide them with every necessary, and with horses for their journey to Mexico.

This vessel had very favorable weather, and soon reached the little island. The joy of Zuazo and his companions can easily be imagined; but they had, in this interval, to their great sorrow, lost their friend father Gonzalo, who gradually sunk under hardships to which he was

unaccustomed. They commended his departed soul to God, embarked on board the vessel which had come to their deliverance, and, in a short time, reached the coast of New Spain, from whence they arrived in Medellin, where they met with a very kind reception. From this place they hastened to Mexico, where Cortes gave them one of his own palaces to live in, and shortly after appointed Zuazo his alcalde major.

What I have here related of Zuazo's voyage to New Spain I have copied word for word from a letter which Cortes wrote to us the town council of Guacasualco about it, which exactly corresponds with what the sailors related themselves. The reader may, therefore, rely upon this as being a true narrative.

CHAPTER CLXIV.

How Cortes despatched Alvarado to subdue the province of Guatimala, and to found a colony there.

CORTES strove to emulate Alexander the Macedonian in all things; his thoughts were always busied with some grand scheme, and his love of dominion knew no bounds: when, therefore, with the assistance of his excellent officers and brave soldiers, he had rebuilt and repeopled the great city of Mexico, and had founded the towns of Guanaca, Zacatula, Colima, Vera Cruz, Panuco, and Guacasualco, he also determined to subdue the thickly-populated province of Guatimala, the inhabitants of which were very warlike. Cortes knew that there were gold mines in this country, and had several times invited the inhabitants to submit, but received no answer in return; he therefore resolved to despatch Alvarado thither to subdue the country and to found colonies in it. For this important campaign he selected above 300 foot, of which 120 were musketeers and crossbow-men, 153 horse, and four field-pieces, with an abundant supply of powder. The chief artilleryman was Usagre, and above 300 auxiliary troops, composed of Tlascallans, Cholullans, and Mexicans were joined to these forces. Father Olmedo, who was a most intimate friend of Alvarado, also begged Cortes that he might join him in this campaign, in order to preach the gospel to the inhabitants; but our general, who always wished to have father Olmedo near his person, refused his request, and appointed another excellent priest to this expedition who had come to New Spain with Garay, and who gladly undertook the office of missionary. Father Olmedo, however, left Cortes no peace until he had obtained his con-

sent, though this was given with great reluctance, as the father was of valuable assistance to him, and a man whom he consulted in all matters of importance.

The instructions which Alvarado received were, above all, to strive by every means to gain the inhabitants by kindness and friendship; besides which, father Olmedo was supplied with the necessary interpreters, through whom he was to make every exertion to induce the inhabitants to abolish their human sacrifices and other abominations, and to lead them into the bosom of our holy Christian church. As soon as these troops were in marching order, Alvarado took leave of Cortes, and left Mexico on the 13th of December of the year 1523. He took his route over some mountains in the province of Guantepec, and quelled an insurrection there which had broken out among the inhabitants of the country. From this place he marched to the large township of Tecuantepec, which is inhabited by a tribe of the Tzapotecs, where he met with the kindest reception, and was even presented with some gold. The province of Soconusco, which he next came to, he also found in perfect peace. This country was at that time thickly populated, and contained about 15,000 inhabitants, who all quietly submitted, and brought Alvarado a present in gold; but as soon as he left this province, everything began to wear a warlike appearance, and, on his next day's march, when he arrived in the neighbourhood of the Zapotitlan townships, he came up to a bridge which lay across a small river, near to which there was a dangerous pass, and large bodies of the enemy were drawn up in order of battle, to prevent Alvarado from crossing over. Here Alvarado encountered a severe engagement, and lost one horse, and had many of his men wounded, of whom one died shortly after. It was not only the warriors of Zapotitlan which opposed Alvarado, but they were joined by so vast a body of the inhabitants from the surrounding country, that, though the Spaniards continually mowed down the enemy's ranks, they were obliged to renew the attack three several times; and it was only after a good deal of hard fighting that our troops at last gained a complete victory over them, and they then submitted as vassals to our emperor. The next township Alvarado came to was Quetzaltenanco, which had a considerable population, and likewise bid an obstinate resistance to the Spaniards, of whom a great number were wounded. The inhabitants of this place had been joined by their neighbours of Utatlan, the chief of a series of townships round about Quetzaltenanco: nevertheless, Alvarado put them to flight, and strewed the field of battle with dead and wounded.

From this place his route lay through a dangerous and very narrow mountain defile, about six miles in length. The troops therefore marched forward with every military precaution, and began to ascend the acclivity. When they had arrived at the most elevated point of the pass, they found a fat old Indian female and a dog, which had been sacrificed to their gods; a certain sign of war. This indeed was soon verified; for they had not marched far before they came up with immense bodies of the enemy, who were lying in wait for them, so that Alvarado stood in great danger of being hemmed in on all sides. At this spot the pass was so narrow, and the ground so thickly strewed with stones, that the horse were scarcely able to render any assistance; but the crossbow-men, musketeers, and the rest of the foot, armed with bucklers and swords, closed the more bravely with the enemy, who retreated fighting, down the narrow pass to some deep hollows, where other bodies stood drawn up in order of battle. From this place the enemy, by a preconcerted plan, fell back, as Alvarado advanced, to another position, where they had posted above 6000 of their men. These were the warriors of Utatlan and their subjects, who had made sure they would easily be able to cut off Alvarado, with the whole of his men; but our troops fought with such determination and courage, that they put the enemy to flight, having only three of their men and two horses wounded. The enemy, however, rallied again, were joined by other large bodies, and renewed the attack with great intrepidity. The most desperate part of the action took place near a fountain, where a strong body of the enemy rushed forth from an ambush; so that the Spaniards were compelled to fight foot to foot with the Indians, who had in particular singled out the cavalry, and each horse was attacked by three of the enemy, while several others at the same time strove to pull them to the ground, by hanging to their tails. Here the Spaniards were placed in the utmost danger, for the enemy's numbers were overwhelming; but father Olmedo encouraged the men, reminding them that they were fighting with the intention of serving the Almighty, and to promote His holy religion; that the Lord would assist them, and that they must either conquer or die in this battle!

Notwithstanding this, and the utmost endeavours of the Spaniards, the victory remained dubious for a length of time, until at last the enemy began to give way. Now the cavalry were able to gain the open field, and they dispersed the Indians on every side with considerable slaughter, so that they were unable to show themselves for the next three days. During this time Alvarado encamped on the field of battle, and sent out small detachments to forage. He then marched, with the

whole of his troops, to the township of Quetzaltenanco, where he learnt that two caziques of Utatlan were killed in the recent battles. In this place he allowed his men to halt for some time, to dress their wounds, but soon received intelligence that the surrounding tribes again contemplated an attack upon him, for which purpose they had assembled an army of two Xiquipiles, there being 8000 warriors to one Xiquipil. With this formidable body of 16,000 men the enemy were determined to conquer or die. On receiving this information Alvarado drew out his troops on the open plain in order of battle; nor was it long before the enemy came pouring forth with great force, and strove to surround him on all sides; but as the cavalry were unrestricted in their movements on this level plain, they made heavy charges on the enemy's line, who were soon put to a disorderly flight. Several of Alvarado's men were wounded, but some of the most distinguished chiefs had fallen in the battle; so that from this moment the Indians really began to fear the Spaniards, and the whole province came to the determination of suing for peace, and they sent ambassadors to Alvarado with a small present in gold. But all this was mere stratagem on the enemy's part, whose object was to entice the Spaniards, under the assumed cloak of peace, to the strongly situated town of Utatlan, which was surrounded by deep hollows, and there to put them to death, when they least suspected any treachery.

As I have just stated, a great number of distinguished personages arrived in Alvarado's camp to sue for peace; they handed over their miserable present, were remarkably courteous in their behaviour, and begged of Alvarado to pardon their late hostilities, and to acknowledge them as vassals of our great emperor. This humble language they accompanied by an invitation for him and his troops to return with them to the town of Utatlan, which they said was very large, and they would provide them excellent quarters, with every possible comfort.

Alvarado, who did not for an instant imagine they had any treacherous designs, received the caziques very kindly, granted them the peace they sued for, and accepted of their polite invitation. The next morning early he drew out all his troops, and marched to Utatlan; but as soon as the Spaniards arrived in this town they were struck with the warlike aspect which everything wore. There were only two gates by which the town could be entered, one of which was approached by a flight of twenty-five steps, and the other by a causeway, which was intersected in several places. There was also a large building, which was strongly fortified; the houses of the town stood very close together, and the streets were uncommonly narrow. There was neither a woman nor a

child to be seen anywhere, for these had all been concealed in the hollows adjoining the town, and it was very late before the troops could obtain any provisions, which even then were bad. The caziques had likewise assumed a different tone to that of the previous day, and Alvarado was secretly informed by some of the inhabitants of Quetzaltenanco that the caziques of Utatlan intended to fall suddenly on his troops in the night, and massacre them all; for which purpose they had concealed a number of their warriors in the adjoining hollows, who were to rush forth from their hiding-place the instant they observed the smoke rising from the houses of the town which would be set on fire, and to fall upon the Spaniards, who would be half suffocated by the smoke and flames, while the inhabitants attacked them from another quarter.

The instant Alvarado was apprized of the imminent danger which threatened him, he assembled the officers, with the whole of the men, and informed them of what he had heard, adding, that their safety now depended upon their leaving the town as quickly as possible, and in gaining some level spot between the hollows, as it was then too late to reach the open field. He then made the necessary arrangements for the troops to abandon the place, and called upon the principal personages of the town, as if he were quite unconscious of their designs; but in the course of the conversation he remarked, as if by chance, that his horses were accustomed to go to grass for a certain time each day, for which reason he would be obliged to quit the town again, where altogether the houses were too much crowded, and the streets too narrow for him. This came like a thunderclap upon the caziques, nor could they hide their inward grief and vexation when they saw the Spaniards marching out again.

As soon as Alvarado was outside the town he threw off the mask, ordered the chief cazique to be seized, and he was tried in due form by a court-martial, which sentenced him to be burnt at the stake. Before this sentence was put into execution father Olmedo begged permission of Alvarado to make an attempt to convert this Indian to Christianity, for which purpose he requested that his execution might be postponed for one day; but of this one day came a second day, at the end of which it pleased the Lord Jesus to incline the cazique's heart to Christianity, and he allowed himself to be baptized by the father, who then prevailed upon Alvarado to commute his sentence into that of hanging. The son of this unfortunate man was then raised to the caziquedom. But matters did not end here, for Alvarado was now attacked by the Indians, who lay concealed in the hollows, but he soon put them to flight.

There was another large township in this province, called Guatimala, the inhabitants of which had been duly apprized of all the battles which Alvarado had fought since his arrival in the country, and how he had each time come off victorious. They also knew that he was staying at Utatlan, and that he made frequent incursions into the surrounding townships, and compelled them to submit to his arms. As the inhabitants of Guatimala were at enmity with the Utatlans, they despatched ambassadors to Alvarado with a present of gold, and declared themselves vassals of our emperor; adding, that they were ready to assist the Spaniards in carrying on the war in that province. Alvarado received these ambassadors in the kindest manner possible, thanked them for their present, and he told them, in order to prove whether they were in earnest in soliciting his friendship and in their offers of assistance, that he would demand of them 2000 of their troops to join his army. He was totally unacquainted, he continued, with the country, which was besides so full of hollows and narrow passes, that he should be glad of this reinforcement to clear the roads which had been barricaded by trees, and to transport his baggage. The inhabitants of Guatimala soon showed they were friendly disposed, and it was not long before the required troops, with their generals, arrived in the Spanish camp. Alvarado staid about eight days in the province of Utatlan, during which time he made repeated incursions into the different townships, and as several of these again revolted after submitting to the Spanish crown, great numbers of the male and female inhabitants were carried off as slaves and marked with the red-hot iron. Of these slaves a fifth were set apart for his majesty, and the remainder were immediately divided among the troops.

Upon this Alvarado marched to Guatimala, where the inhabitants gave him a kind and hospitable reception. Here the men enjoyed some rest, and they congratulated each other on the success that had attended their arms, and now they thought with pleasure on the fatigues they had undergone. Among other things, Alvarado declared to father Olmedo and his officers, that he had not been in any battle where he considered himself in greater danger than in the one they had recently fought with the tribes of Utatlan, who had combined excessive ferocity with uncommon bravery, and he considered that his men had done wonders on that occasion. "It was the arm of God," remarked father Olmedo, "that was with us, and that He may not desert us in future, let us appoint a day of thanksgiving to the Almighty and the blessed Virgin, and celebrate high mass, and I will preach a sermon to these Indians." Alvarado and the other officers immediately

fell in with this idea, and after an altar had been erected the whole of the men made the communion, and high mass was performed with every solemnity. A great number of Indians were present on the occasion, to whom father Olmedo preached so many excellent things, and gave so many convincing proofs of the truth of our holy religion, that above thirty of them became converts to Christianity. In the course of the two following days they were baptized, and several others expressed a similar wish, when they found that the Spaniards made more of the converts than of the others. Upon the whole, there was nothing but rejoicing and happiness between the troops of Alvarado and the inhabitants of this place.

I must now relate that the caziques of Guatimala drew Alvarado's attention to some townships which lay at no great distance in front of a lake. The inhabitants of these places were at enmity with Guatimala, and their stronghold was a rock of great height, which they had further strengthened by various outworks. Of these townships, Atatlan was the principal one, and it was very evident the inhabitants bore the Spaniards very little good will, since, notwithstanding their near vicinity, they had not thought proper to send them any messengers of peace. Alvarado, therefore, sent them a most polite invitation to come and make a friendly alliance with him; but all the answer they returned was to ill use the messengers. This invitation Alvarado renewed three several times, and as they still refused to despatch any ambassadors to him, he determined to march thither in person, with 140 foot, 40 horse, and 2000 auxiliaries of Guatimala. When he had approached within a short distance of the township he again sent a friendly message to the inhabitants, who replied by a flight of arrows; upon which he advanced up to the water's edge. At this moment a vast body of Indians fell suddenly upon him, under the sound of their wild music, the whole of them accoutred in their full war costume, with lances of uncommon length. This was a very severe conflict which lasted for some time, and a good number of the Spaniards were wounded; but the Indians at last fled precipitately and strove to regain the fortified rock, but Alvarado followed so close at their heels that he carried the rock before they could rally themselves, and he would have slaughtered a great number of them if they had not leaped into the water and made for a small island on the lake. He then permitted his troops to plunder the houses which lay on the banks, and encamped on a plain which was covered with maise plantations. The day following he marched to Atatlan, which he found quite deserted by its inhabitants; from this place he sent out small

detachments to forage the country, and particularly the cacao-plantations, which abounded in this neighbourhood. One of these detachments succeeded in capturing two chiefs of the township, whom Alvarado despatched with some others that had been taken prisoners on the previous day, to the caziques, desiring them to come and sue for peace; if they complied, he would liberate all the prisoners he had taken, and they themselves should receive the most honorable treatment; but if they still obstinately refused to submit, he would punish them as he had the inhabitants of Quetzaltenanco and Utatlan, by cutting down all their cacao trees, and otherwise damaging their property in every possible manner. These threats had the desired effect, they sent messengers with a present in gold, and submitted as vassals to our emperor; when Alvarado again returned to Guatimala.

Father Olmedo, in the meantime, was doing all in his power to convert the Indians to Christianity; he ordered an altar with a cross to be erected, in front of which he regularly performed mass, and the inhabitants, on these occasions, imitated the Spaniards in all their religious ceremonies. Father Olmedo also placed on the altar an image of the Virgin Mary, which had been presented to him by Garay in his dying moments. This image was of such extreme beauty that the Indians became quite enamoured of it, and father Olmedo explained what was meant by such an image, and how Christians prayed before it.

Nothing now happened for several days worthy of mention, excepting that by degrees every township of the surrounding neighbourhood sent ambassadors to Alvarado, and declared themselves vassals of our emperor; even the Pipiles, a tribe inhabiting the sea-coast along the southern ocean. As most of the ambassadors complained that the inhabitants of a township, named Izcuintepec, who were a very ill-disposed people, would not allow them to pass through their territory; besides that they committed all manner of depredations on their neighbours; Alvarado determined that they also should sue for peace and submit to his power. But as they showed no inclination to do either, and sent an insolent answer to his message, he marched out one morning with the greatest part of his troops, accompanied by a strong body of auxiliaries, and fell suddenly upon this township before the inhabitants in the least suspected his approach. But it would have been better if Alvarado had never visited this ill-fated town, for he treated the inhabitants in a manner that was neither conformable with justice nor with the wishes of our emperor.

What I have related of this campaign in the province of Guatimala is more minutely described in a memorial written by Gonzalo de

Alvarado, a brother of Pedro, and an inhabitant of Guatimala; by perusing which the reader may gain further particulars, and will be enabled to correct any errors I may have committed. I consider myself bound to make this observation, as I was not present in this campaign, for I did not arrive in Guatimala until the year 1524, when the inhabitants had again revolted, just as we were about returning to Mexico from our expedition to the Higueras and Honduras, under the captain Luis Marin. On that occasion we had several engagements with the enemy, who had everywhere dug deep holes and barricaded the narrow passes along the line of our march. We were detained two whole days in the township of Juanagazapa, or Petapa, the neighbourhood of which was full of deep hollows, and we had several battles with the enemy, who strove to prevent our march through a very dangerous mountain pass. Here I was slightly wounded by an arrow, and it cost us much hard fighting before we could force this passage. I could say a good deal of the battle we fought on this spot, and it is with difficulty I restrain myself at present, in order to relate all the circumstances more fully in the proper place. It was about this time also that a rumour was spread of Cortes' death. With respect to the inhabitants of Guatimala, I have merely further to remark that they were not a very warlike people, nor did they ever bid any stout resistance unless they were strongly posted in the hollows of the mountains, and then even their arrows did us very little harm.

CHAPTER CLXV.

How Cortes despatches an armament, under Christobal de Oli, to the Higueras and Honduras, to subject these provinces; and what further took place during this expedition.

CORTES was informed that the provinces of Higueras[33] and Honduras were uncommonly rich, and possessed lucrative gold and silver mines; in which belief he had been further strengthened by the assertions of several sailors who had visited these parts, and affirmed that they had witnessed with their own eyes that the Indians there fastened pieces of gold to their fishing nets instead of lead, in order to sink them; besides which, these sailors were of opinion there must be somewhere in that latitude a narrow arm of the sea, which ran into the southern ocean, and this was another reason why Cortes was desirous of exploring those parts, particularly as he had received instructions from

his majesty to use his utmost endeavours to discover some such passage to the southern ocean, in order to promote the trade with the spice islands by a shorter route. Cortes therefore determined to fit out an expedition for this purpose, the command of which he gave to Oli, his quartermaster-general. He was induced for various reasons to intrust this man with so important a command; first of all, Oli was entirely indebted to him for his successful career in life; secondly, he was a married man; and lastly, he possessed considerable property in the neighbourhood of Mexico; so that Cortes considered he could every way place implicit reliance on his fidelity and obedience. As the route overland to these provinces would have been too tedious, expensive, and difficult, Cortes determined for an expedition thither by sea, and fitted out five vessels and one brigantine, with three hundred and seventy men, among whom there were one hundred musketeers and crossbow-men, with twenty-two horse. In this corps there were also five of the veteran Conquistadores, all men who had distinguished themselves on every occasion. They had already settled themselves quietly down in New Spain, and were in every respect entitled to enjoy the sweets of repose; but Cortes was not the man to whom you could say, "I am now tired, general, of military life, allow me therefore to spend the remainder of my days in peace and quiet;" but he commanded you to go, and if you would not, he forced you. Among other officers who accompanied Oli was Briones of Salamanca, the same who commanded one of the brigantines during the siege of Mexico, and who had formerly served in the campaigns of Italy. This man was of a most irascible disposition, and he hated Cortes from the bottom of his soul; but he was not the only one, for several others took part in this expedition who were equally ill inclined towards our general, who had made himself a great many enemies among the troops, by neglecting to bestow upon them a fair proportion of the Indians and of the gold.

Oli's instructions were to set sail from Vera Cruz, and shape his course for the Havannah, where he would find Alonso de Conteras, one of Cortes' veterans, whom the latter had despatched thither, in advance, with 6000 pesos, to purchase horses, cassave bread, and salted meat, for the armament, all of which Oli was to take on board, and then sail straight for the Higueras, to which place he would then have an easy voyage. Cortes' further instructions were, that he should make every possible effort to gain the Indians by kindness, and to build a town in some advantageous spot, near some harbour, from whence he could by degrees subject the whole country, and induce the inhabitants to bring in their gold and silver; but he was, above all things, to search for the

passage to the southern ocean, and should he arrive there, to explore the harbours on that coast, if he found any.

To this armament were also appointed two priests, one of whom understood the Mexican language, and they were particularly desired to preach the gospel among the Indians, and by kindly remonstrances, joined to convincing arguments, induce them to abolish their human sacrifices, with other abominations practised among them. Every place the troops visited they were to look out for those diabolical cages in which the Indians shut up those they intended as victims for their sacrifices; these they were ordered to release, and the cages were to be destroyed. The priests were also to erect crosses in every township, and they were provided with a number of images of the Virgin Mary to present to the inhabitants.

After Cortes had strongly impressed all this on Oli's mind, he bid him and all his troops an affectionate farewell. When Oli arrived in Vera Cruz he found everything in readiness, so that he was enabled to embark immediately with his troops, and set sail; but I have forgotten both the year and the day of the month when he left.[34] However, he had a very favorable passage to the Havannah, where he found the horses, with the provisions and other necessaries, in readiness. Here he was also joined by five of the veteran Conquistadores, who had been banished from New Spain by Diego de Ocampo, in the height of his wrath, during the investigation into the affairs of Panuco, after Garay's troops had occasioned an insurrection in that province. These men were the first who whispered the idea into Oli's ear of revolting against Cortes, and Briones had frequently spoken to him to the same effect; but Diego Velasquez, governor of Cuba, and the mortal enemy of Cortes, urged him in the strongest terms to refuse all further obedience to our general. He even visited Oli on board the vessels, and they came to a secret agreement between themselves jointly to subdue the Higueras and Honduras in his majesty's name. Oli was to take upon himself the active part, and Velasquez, on his side, was to procure him every necessary, and to support him with his money. His majesty was to be duly apprized of all this, and to be petitioned to confer upon them the government of all their conquests.

With respect to Christobal de Oli, I must observe that he was a man of uncommon bravery, and excelled both as a cavalry and foot soldier; but he certainly did not possess sufficient talent for a commander-in-chief, but was second to no man under command. About this time he may have been in his forty-sixth year, and was either a native of Baëza or of Lunares. His outward appearance was extremely handsome;

high of stature, carrying with it the very expression of muscular power; his limbs were beautifully proportioned, and his shoulders broad, while a ruddy hue, most pleasing to the eye, was constantly upon his cheek. There was only one fault to be found with his features, which was a deep cut in his under lip. In language he was rather imperious and coarse, but in other respects very agreeable in conversation; he had, upon the whole, many good qualities, particularly a noble frankness of disposition, which gained him the confidence of every person. As long as he staid in Mexico he was quite devoted to Cortes, but subsequently his ambitious desire for command, and not to be commanded, with the bad advice of evil-minded persons, completely blinded him. It must also be remembered that in his early youth he had served under Velasquez, and he could not forget the bread which, as a boy, he had eaten in his house. In this way it happened that he quite forgot he was vastly more indebted to Cortes than to Diego Velasquez.

After he had thus come to a secret understanding with the governor of Cuba, he was visited by many of the inhabitants of this place, who all strongly advised him to throw off the yoke of Cortes, thereby strengthening him in his evil designs. The armament being now fully equipped, he set sail from the Havannah, and arrived on the 3d of May, after a very prosperous voyage, about sixty miles on the other side of Puerto Caballo, and disembarked his men in a small bay, where he immediately began to lay the foundations of a town, to which he gave the name of Triunfo de la Cruz, and, according to the instructions he had received from Cortes, he selected the alcaldes and regidors from among the veteran Conquistadores above mentioned. He likewise took possession of the country for his majesty in the name of Cortes, and otherwise punctually obeyed the orders he had received, that the latter's friends might not discover what his real intentions were, until a good opportunity should offer itself of gaining them over to his side. I have likewise been assured that, if he found these provinces did not produce much gold or silver, he was determined to return to Mexico, and assure Cortes that his only reason for making that secret agreement with Velasquez was to procure troops and provisions at the latter's expense; the best proof of which would be his having taken possession of the country in Cortes' name.

Let us in the meantime allow Oli to build his new town, for it was not till eight months after that Cortes received intelligence of his revolt, when I will return to this subject. I must now relate what took place in Guacasualco, and how I, with the captain Luis Marin, was despatched to subdue the province of Chiapa.

CHAPTER CLXVI.

How we who were left behind in Guacasualco were constantly occupied in tranquillising the rebellious provinces; how Luis Marin, by command of Cortes, marches into Chiapa, to subject that province; myself and father Juan de las Varillas being particularly desired by Cortes to join him in this campaign.

A CONSIDERABLE number of us veteran Conquistadores and persons of quality had settled ourselves in the province of Guacasualco, and the lands which had been divided among us were of very considerable extent, lying dispersed among the provinces of Guacasualco, Citla, Tabasco, Cimatan, and Chontalpa, stretching across the mountains of Cachulazoque and Guilenes as far as Cinacatan; including also Chamula, the town of Chiapa, Papanaustla, and Pinula, in the neighbourhood of Mexico; further, the provinces of Chaltepec, Guazcatepec, Chinanta, and Tepeaca, besides several townships. But in the beginning most of the provinces we had subdued in New Spain each time rebelled when the different proprietors came to demand their tribute, and they were frequently put to death by the inhabitants; which was also the case in Guacasualco, where the whole of the townships had from time to time rebelled against us; so that we were constantly obliged to march in small detachments from one district to another, in order again to bring the inhabitants to obedience.

Among others, the inhabitants of Cimatan likewise revolted, and peremptorily refused to obey our mandates; and our captain Luis Marin, not wishing to send any strong detachment of his troops thither at first, despatched myself, Rodrigo de Enao, Francisco Martin, Francisco Ximenes, with four Indians of Guacasualco, to the rebels, in order to try if we could not induce them by kind remonstrances to return to their duty.

In this province the generality of townships lie between marshes and deep rivers; when, therefore, we had arrived within eight miles of the place of our destination, we despatched a messenger to the inhabitants to inform them of our arrival; but instead of returning any answer, three separate bodies of their warriors, armed with bows and lances, marched out against us, and attacked us so vigorously, that two of our companions were instantly killed. I myself was dangerously wounded by an arrow in the throat, from which the blood flowed so fast that my life was in the utmost danger. Next Francisco Martin was wounded, who stood close to me; and we, in our turn, certainly wounded several

of the enemy; but at length we were compelled to seek our safety in flight, and try if we could not take possession of some canoes which lay near at hand, in a river called the Macapa. While my comrades were striving to accomplish this, I was obliged, though heavily wounded, to remain alone behind; and in order not to be killed outright, I summoned what little recollection I had, and hid myself between the bushes. Here I was again enabled to take courage, and I swore to the blessed Virgin that these dogs should not, at least, get me into their power this time! I then collected all my strength, leaped forth from among the bushes, fell vigorously upon the Indians, and I succeeded, by dint of heavy blows and thrusts, to cut my way through them; so that I was enabled, though wounded afresh, to reach the spot where Francisco Martin, with four trustworthy Indians, was waiting with the canoes. Even then we must all of us have undoubtedly been cut to pieces, if these faithful men had not defended our baggage to the last, thereby drawing off the enemy's attention from us; and while they were busily engaged in plundering our trunks we found time to set the canoes afloat, and to push off from the shore. Thus, through the great mercy of God, we made our escape by means of these canoes, and passed across this deep and broad river, which abounded with alligators; but in order to elude the pursuit of these Cimatecs, we were obliged to conceal ourselves for the space of eight days among the mountains. In the meantime the news of our disaster had reached Guacasualco, and the four Indians, who had also been fortunate enough to save themselves by flight, confidently asserted, as we were so long in returning, that we must have been killed. Luis Marin, who likewise gave us up for lost, had already, as was customary at that time, divided our Indian commendaries among the other Conquistadores, and had written to Cortes for fresh indentures to convey the property; besides that, he had sold off all our moveable goods by public auction. However, after the space of twenty-three days, we again, to the surprise of all, made our reappearance in Guacasualco, where our friends were indeed delighted to see us, but those who had obtained our possessions drew very long faces.

Luis Marin was at length fully convinced that he should never be able to put down the rebellion in the provinces, unless he was allowed a stronger body of troops, for now he was sacrificing the lives of the few men he had to no purpose. He resolved therefore to repair in person to Mexico, and beg Cortes for a further reinforcement, and other necessaries, to carry on a war. He particularly cautioned the Spaniards to remain quiet during his absence, and

ordered that they should not move to a greater distance than twenty miles from the town, unless to procure themselves provisions.

When Marin reached Mexico, and had given Cortes an account of the state of affairs in Guacasualco, he only furnished him with twenty soldiers, and desired him to return thither without delay. Among these was Alonso de Grado, whom I have so often mentioned above, and father Juan de las Varillas, who was a profound scholar, and had come to New Spain with Zuazo. According to his own account, he had studied in the college of Santa Cruz, at Salamanca, and he said he was of a very distinguished family.

Marin's instructions from Cortes were to march with all the Spaniards who had settled in Guacasualco, and the fresh troops he brought with him, into Chiapa, to quell the disturbances, and found a new town in this province. We therefore equipped ourselves in the best possible manner for this campaign, and commenced operations by clearing the road along the line of our route, for the country was full of swamps and dangerous mountains. We had to carry along with us heavy beams, by means of which our horse were to pass the marshes, but even those were insufficient in many places. In this way, with the utmost difficulty, we arrived at Tezpuatlan, which township we could only reach by ferrying across a broad river in canoes, for which purpose we had first to run up the river to a considerable distance. From this place we arrived at Cachula, which lies high among the mountains, in the province of Chiapa, and must not be confounded with a township of the same name, prettily situated in the neighbourhood of la Puebla de los Angeles. Leaving Cachula, we passed through several small townships dependent on it; here we made ourselves a perfectly new road along the river, which flows from Chiapa, for there was previously no road whatever in this place. The inhabitants of the surrounding districts lived in perpetual fear of the Chiapanecs, who at that time were the most warlike people of New Spain. I will not even except the Tlascallans, the Mexicans, the Zapotecs, or the Minges; nor were the monarchs of Mexico ever able to subdue them; besides which, their population was extensive, and their warlike spirit universally dreaded. They were continually at war with their neighbours of Cinacatan, the tribes on the lake Quilenayas, and with the Zoques; in short, they levied contributions on all the surrounding townships, dragged the inhabitants forcibly away to sacrifice them to their gods, and devoured their flesh at their festive orgies. They posted troops in all the narrow passes of Teguantepec, to lay wait for the trading Indian merchants, thereby often destroying all intercourse between the different

provinces. They had even carried off into slavery the population of whole districts, and formed settlements of them in the neighbourhood of Chiapa, compelling them to cultivate their plantations.

After we had marched to a considerable distance up this river towards Chiapa, (it was during the lent of the year 1524,) we halted within a short distance of this place. Here Marin reviewed his troops, which he had been unable to do up to this moment, as a number of the inhabitants of the country had been absent, besides many of the soldiers, to collect the tribute of the townships, which lay dispersed among the Cachula mountains. Our muster-roll gave twenty-five horse, but of which five were scarcely fit for service; fifteen crossbow-men, and eight musketeers. We had one field-piece, and one artillery-man, who had served in the campaign of Italy; but that was all, for he was the most determined coward I ever saw. The rest of our Spanish troops consisted of those who were armed with swords and bucklers, amounting to sixty men. Further we were joined by eighty Mexicans and the cazique of Cachula, with several other distinguished personages. But the men of this latter place stood in such dread of the enemy, that we could only employ them in clearing the road as we advanced, and to transport our baggage.

As we approached nearer to the enemy we conducted our march with greater military precaution, and the nimblest of our men were always in front of the troops. I myself formed one of the scouts on this occasion and had left my horse behind, as the nature of the ground here was in every respect unfavorable for the cavalry. We were continually a couple of miles in advance of the main body, and as the inhabitants of Chiapa are very expert huntsmen, we soon came up with some of them, and immediately they kindled fires in various directions to assemble their warriors. In the vicinity of their townships the road was uncommonly narrow, but the country round about was beautifully cultivated with maise and different kinds of leguminous plants. The first township we came to was Estapa, which lay about sixteen miles from the chief town, and was totally deserted by its inhabitants; but we found abundance of provisions, consisting in fowls, maise, and other eatables, so that we had a right good supper. As we had carefully posted our watches, and sent out the patroles and pickets, we could not be taken by surprise, and two of the horse came suddenly galloping up with the intelligence that a large body of the enemy was approaching. However, we were always ready for action, so that we marched out against them before they could enter the town. A very severe conflict ensued, for the enemy were well provided with

bows, arrows, lances, pikes of uncommon length, and excellent cotton cuirasses. Besides which they were armed with a species of club, shaped like a scimitar, and as the ground was strewed with stones they did us much injury with their slings, and by an artful manœuvre attempted to surround us, killing two of our men and four horses in the first encounter. Besides which, father Juan and thirteen soldiers, with several of our Indian auxiliaries, were wounded, and Luis Marin himself in two places. The battle lasted until nightfall, when, to our great joy the enemy retreated after we had severely punished them with our swords, muskets, and other weapons. Fifteen of their number lay dead on the field of battle, and several were so dreadfully wounded that they were unable to move. Two of these, who appeared to be men of distinction, assured us that we should be attacked on the following day by the whole armed force of the country.

This night we spent in burying our dead and in dressing the wounds of our men. Our captain was himself very unwell, as he had lost much blood; and by standing so long on the field of battle had chilled his wounds. We observed the utmost vigilance during this night: the horses stood saddled, and the whole of us were ready for action at a moment's notice, for we were almost certain that the enemy contemplated some sudden attack. We considered our position in every respect dangerous, as with all our firing and courageous fighting we had not been able to drive the foe from the field of battle, and we soon discovered that we had to deal with bold and intrepid warriors. Our cavalry were therefore commanded to charge the enemy's line in small bodies, five a-breast, and to poise their lances at the face. Several of us veteran Conquistadores had frequently cautioned the new recruits to adopt this mode of attack, but many of them had neglected this good advice, and imagined they had done enough by merely wounding their antagonist. Four of the less experienced ones had paid dearly for this neglect, for the Indians wrested the lances out of their hands and wounded them and their horses with their own weapons. In this battle, six or seven of the enemy had boldly set upon each horse at a time, and laid hold of them with their hands; one of the men they had already dragged by force from his saddle, and they would undoubtedly have carried him off and sacrificed him to their idols if we had not hastened up to his assistance.

During this night we came to the determination of marching early the next day against the town of Chiapa itself. And, indeed, it might in every respect be termed a town, so fine an appearance had the houses, besides being so regularly built. Its population amounted to

above 4000 souls, in which that of the many surrounding townships is not included, though the whole of them were subject to Chiapa. Early next morning, accordingly, we marched forward for this place and observed the utmost military precaution; but we had scarcely advanced one mile when we came up with the united forces of this province. The enemy, with surprising swiftness and accoutred in their most splendid war costume, fell upon us from all sides at once under the most hideous yells, and fought with the ferocity of infuriated lions. Our black artilleryman, (for he was every way entitled to the appellation of negro,) in the dread of the moment had quite lost his senses, and forgot to fire the cannon; but when at last, by hollowing out to him at the top of our voices, he summoned sufficient courage to fire it with a trembling hand, he wounded three of our own men, instead of committing any destruction among the enemy's ranks. Our captain seeing how matters stood, now ordered the cavalry to form themselves in the small bodies above mentioned, the rest of the troops to close in a firm body together and in that way to fall vigorously upon the enemy; but their numbers were too great, and if there had not been many of us present who were accustomed to Indian warfare, the rest of the troops would have been in the greatest consternation. We were indeed astonished to find how firmly these Indians maintained their ground. Father Juan kept constantly encouraging us to the attack, by saying, "That our reward would lay with God and the emperor." Our captain likewise animated us with the cry of: "Forward! gentlemen, Santiago is with us!" And now we fell upon the enemy with renewed courage and compelled them to give way. From the very unfavorable state of the ground, which was covered with loose stones, our cavalry were unable to pursue the enemy with any success; but we kept as close at their heels as we possibly could, and marched with less precaution, as we thought this day's work was at an end, and we offered up thanks to God for our victory. However, when we had arrived near to some small hills we found even larger bodies of men drawn up in order of battle. Besides their usual weapons they had a number of ropes with loops at the end, which they threw at the horses in order to pull them to the ground. Strong nets which they use for the purpose of snaring the wild deer were also fixed at certain distances to catch our horse, and they had other smaller ropes with loops, which were to be thrown about our necks to pull us towards them. The whole of these troops in an instant fell upon us, pouring forth as they came along so vast a number of stones, darts, and arrows, that almost every man of us received a fresh wound. In this severe engagement we lost

two Spaniards and five horses, and four of the cavalry soldiers had their lances wrested from their hands.

During this battle we saw a very fat old Indian female marching up and down between the enemy's ranks. She was, we were told, venerated as a goddess by these people. She had divined to her countrymen that we should be vanquished the moment she appeared among them on the field of battle. This woman carried in her hands an idol, carved of stone; and an earthen censer, in which she burnt incense; her body was daubed all over with various colours, and raw cotton was sticking to the paint. Without evincing the least fear she walked into the midst of our Indian allies while they were hotly engaged with the enemy; but this cursed witch met with very little respect from them, for they tore her limb from limb.

When we saw what terrific bodies of the enemy attacked us from all sides, and the astonishing bravery with which they fought, we began to consider ourselves in a very critical position, and we begged of father Juan to commend us in prayer to the protection of the Almighty. We then once more fell vigorously upon the enemy and put them to flight. Numbers concealed themselves in the fissures of the rocks, others threw themselves into the river and sought to escape by swimming, of which art these Indians are likewise perfect masters. We now halted for a short time while father Juan sang a salve, in which those who had a good voice joined in chorus. This melody was indeed pleasing to the ear, and we thanked the Almighty the more fervently for this victory, when we considered our great loss in killed and wounded. We then marched to a small township at no great distance from the town, near the river side. Here the cherry-trees were hanging full of ripe fruit, for it was then lent, which is the season when cherries come to perfection in this country, and they were of a most delicious flavour; we spent the whole day here in order to bury our dead in places where they would not easily be discovered by the inhabitants. Several of our men were wounded, and ten of the horses very severely so; we therefore resolved to pass the night in this township.

The hour of midnight was already past, when ten distinguished Indians arrived in our camp from the townships in the neighbourhood of Chiapa. They had crossed the deep and broad river with five canoes in the utmost silence, in order to elude the vigilance of the Chiapanec troops, and as they came creeping along the bank in a very suspicious manner they were seized by our outposts and brought in prisoners, which was the very thing they desired. When brought into

the presence of our captain they addressed him as follows: "We are not, sir, Chiapanecs, but natives of the province of Xaltepec. The base Chiapanecs once commenced a destructive war with us and put great numbers of our countrymen to death, and after plundering us of all we possessed they carried off the greater part of the inhabitants with our wives into slavery, to till their grounds. It is now twelve years that we have toiled for them in base servitude. We are compelled to labour in the plantations of our oppressors, are obliged to fish for them and to do all manner of hard work; but this is not all, for whenever it suits them they forcibly carry off our wives and daughters. We now come to offer you a sufficient number of canoes to pass the river, which we will despatch hither this very night. We will also point out to you the safest ford, for we assure you, without our assistance, you will have great difficulty and run great risk in crossing over. In reward for this good office, we beg of you when you shall have vanquished these Chiapanecs, to rescue us out of their power and allow us to return to our homes. And in order that you may place perfect reliance in what we have stated, we have brought as a present for you three ornaments of gold in the shape of diadems, which we have left behind in the canoes, besides some fowls and cherries."

They then begged permission of our captain to return to their canoes, in order to fetch these presents, telling him what great precaution they were obliged to use not to fall into the hands of the enemy, who had posted watches everywhere along the river.

Our captain joyfully accepted of their kind offer, and not only promised to grant them their wish of returning to their own country, but to give them a share of the booty we should make in Chiapa. On further questioning them respecting the last battle, they informed us that the enemy had above 120 dead and wounded, but they were determined to attack us the next day again with their united forces; besides that, they would bring into the field the inhabitants of the townships which they, the ambassadors, now represented, but assured our captain they had secretly agreed among themselves to run over to him as soon as the action commenced. The enemy intended, they further said, to fall upon us while we were crossing the river, should we make this dangerous attempt.

Two of these Indians remained with us, while the others returned to their townships, in order to make the necessary arrangements for despatching twenty canoes to us by break of day, which arrived punctually at the time mentioned. In the meantime we laid ourselves down

to enjoy a little rest, but took every precaution in posting our watches, as we could plainly hear the wild music of shell-trumpets and drums each time a fresh body of the enemy arrived on the banks of the river.

When day began to dawn we again recognized our new friends as they were secretly coming up with their canoes; but the Chiapanecs had already suspected these people would turn their arms against them, and run over to our side, and had taken several of them prisoners; the rest had fled to the top of an elevated temple, where they fortified themselves, and so it happened that the battle should first commence between the enemy and their former slaves.

Our new allies now led us to the place where we were to ford the river, and they exerted themselves to the utmost to hasten our passage across, for they feared the enemy would sacrifice those of their countrymen whom they had captured in the night, unless we arrived speedily to their rescue. When we came to the ford our horse and foot united in a close body together, in order to stand the better against the rapid stream; we then boldly marched into the water, which reached up to our breasts; but the canoes kept close up with us at our side, and in this way we fortunately reached the opposite shore; but here we were suddenly attacked by the enemy with excessive fury before the half of us could get on dry ground. The greater part of us were instantly wounded, some severely so in two places; two of the horses were lost, and one cavalry soldier, named Guerra or Guerrero, a native of Toledo, had unfortunately got with his horse into a whirlpool, where he himself was drowned, but his horse swam on shore.

We were unable for a length of time to gain a firm footing on dry land, and drive back the enemy; nor could we succeed till our new allies fell upon their rear, and richly did they repay them for their last twelve years of oppression. The whole of us now leaped on shore, and attacked the enemy so vigorously that they fled away in disorder. Our captain then drew up the troops in order of battle, desired our new allies, who had assembled in great numbers, to join our ranks, and in this way, with flying colours, we marched in a direct line for the metropolis itself. When we arrived in the principal quarter of the town, where the temples stood, we found the houses so crowded together, that we durst not risk to quarter ourselves there, from fear of fire, but encamped in an open space, where we were out of all danger. Our general then despatched three of our new allies, and six Chiapanec chiefs, whom we had taken prisoners, with a message to the enemy, desiring them to submit peaceably to our emperor. These messengers were also commissioned to inform the enemy that if they sued for

peace without delay, their recent hostilities would be pardoned; but in case they refused to do so, we were determined to punish them severely, and would commence by setting fire to the town. These threats soon brought the enemy to their senses, and they immediately despatched ambassadors to us with a present in gold, offered various excuses for having commenced hostilities with us, and declared themselves vassals of our emperor. At the same time they begged of our captain to forbid our allies setting fire to any more of their dwellings; for they had burnt down several houses in a small township near Chiapa. Luis Marin willingly complied with this request, and strictly commanded both our allies and the inhabitants of Cachula not to commit any further destruction of property.

In this town we found three large wooden cages filled with prisoners, all of whom were merchants, who had been purposely waylaid on the high road by the Chiapanecs, and thrown into these dens to fatten for their sacrifices, and they were all fastened by means of collars to strong beams. Some of these unfortunate beings belonged to the country of the Tzapotecs, others to that of the Quilenes, and several of them were inhabitants of Guautepec and of the province of Soconusco.

We instantly liberated the whole of these prisoners, and sent them to their respective homes. We also found in the temples diabolical-looking idols, all of which father Juan ordered to be burnt on the spot, with the remains of several old and young Indians who had been sacrificed in these buildings. In the temples we also discovered traces of other abominations of a most horrible nature.

Our captain now sent to every township in the neighbourhood, desiring the inhabitants to come and sue for peace, and to declare themselves vassals of our emperor. The first who came over were the people of Cinacatan, Capanaustla, Pinola, Quehuiztlan, Chamula, and those of other townships, whose names I have forgotten; after these came the Quilenes, and other tribes who speak the Zoque language. All these tribes expressed their utter astonishment that we should have been able to vanquish the Chiapanecs with so small a body of men, but were excessively rejoiced, for the whole of them were at enmity with this people.

We remained altogether five days in Chiapa, during which time father Juan celebrated the holy mass, confessed many of our men, and preached several sermons to the Indians in their own language, of which he possessed considerable knowledge. The inhabitants listened to him with great delight, knelt down before the cross, and promised they would allow themselves to be baptized. They became indeed excessively fond

of father Juan, and said we appeared to be a very good kind of people. While we were thus living on the most friendly terms with the inhabitants, one of our men, without asking our captain's leave, quitted the camp with eight Mexicans, and marched to the township of Chamula, which had already submitted to our arms without offering any resistance. This man demanded, in the name of his captain, gold ornaments from the inhabitants, of which they gave him a small quantity; but finding at length he could exact no more from them, he took the principal cazique prisoner, which presumptuous behaviour so exasperated the inhabitants, that at first they were going to kill the Spaniard, but for the moment contented themselves by rising up in arms, and persuaded their neighbours of Quehuiztlan to do the same. When Luis Marin received intelligence of this, he ordered the guilty Spaniard to be brought into his presence, and immediately sent him off to Mexico, there to appear before the tribunal of Cortes, being unwilling to punish him himself, as he was a person in high authority; nor will I, for the sake of his honour, mention his name at present, as I shall again have occasion to speak about him, for he afterwards committed an offence of a more criminal nature, and was, upon the whole, very cruel to the Indians. Luis Marin then sent a messenger to the Chamulans, desiring them to return to their former obedience, as he had sent the Spaniard who had offended them to Mexico, where he would meet with severe punishment; but they returned a most impudent answer to this message, which we were the more determined to resent, as they had incited their neighbours of the surrounding townships to join them in the revolt. We therefore resolved to march against Chamula, and not to desist until we had thoroughly subdued the inhabitants.

Before our departure, father Juan and our captain said many edifying things to the inhabitants of Chiapa respecting our holy religion, and admonished them to abolish their idol-worship, the sacrificing of human beings, and other abominations which they practised. Father Juan then placed a cross and the image of the blessed Virgin on the altar which had been erected, and Luis Marin explained to them, among other things, how we were all vassals of our great emperor, and then took possession of above half their town, in which we intended to form a settlement. Our new allies, who were so serviceable to us in assisting us across the river, marched, with their wives, children, and all their property from the land of the Chiapanecs, and settled themselves forty miles further down the river, at a spot where at present Xaltepec stands, the neighbouring township of Istatlan being also comprehended in their territory.

Before we entered on our expedition against Chamula, we sent to the inhabitants of Cinacatan, who are a people of sound understanding, and, for the greater part, merchants, desiring them to provide us with 200 porters, as we should pass over their town on our way to Chamula. In the same way we requested the Chiapanecs to furnish us with 200 of their warriors to join us in this campaign; these they supplied without any hesitation.

In this way we marched out one morning very early from Chiapa, and arrived on the first day near some salt pits, where the people of Cinacatan had erected huts for us made of green boughs; and about noon on the following day, which happened to be Easter Sunday, we reached the latter township itself. From this place we once more sent a message to the Chamulans, desiring them to return to obedience; but as they still obstinately refused, we were obliged to continue our march thither. The distance from Cinacatan to Chamula may have been about twelve miles; the town itself, from its natural position, was a perfect fortress, and on the side we contemplated our attack was a deep ravine, which was even more formidable and less easy of approach at other points. When we had arrived near to the town, we were greeted by so vast a number of arrows, darts, and stones from the heights above, that the ground was literally covered with them, and five Spaniards, with four horses, were wounded; the enemy, at the same time, yelling most hideously, accompanied by the wild music of shell-trumpets, pipes, and drums, all of which must indeed have terrified those who had never heard the like before. Our captain soon discovered that the cavalry would not be able to act at all among these rugged mountains, and therefore ordered them to move back again into the plain beneath, and watch the movements of the Quiahuitlans, who had likewise revolted, and might fall upon our rear while we were thus hotly engaged with the Chamulans.

We now commenced an incessant fire upon the enemy with our muskets and crossbows, but were unable to do them any injury, so securely were they posted behind the breastworks, their position being in every respect advantageous, and they continually wounded our men. In this way the battle lasted until nightfall, and we were no further advanced than when we commenced our attack in the morning. At one time we attempted to force a passage which led between the ramparts; but here no less than 2000 Indians stretched out against us a forest of long lances; and if we had entered this passage we should have run great danger of being pushed headlong down the deep hollow, and so have been dashed to atoms. Finding we should never be able to make

any impression on the fortress in this way, we determined to send to a small township in the neighbourhood for some wood and other materials, and to construct a species of penthouse sufficiently large to cover twenty men, who were to undermine the fortress with mattocks and pick-axes. Accordingly, when the penthouse was finished, our men set hard to work, and at length succeeded in cutting an opening sufficiently large to admit one person at a time; and by this means only was it possible to get into the town, for we had carefully inspected the spot on all sides, full four miles in circumference, and we found but one other entrance to this rocky height, which would have been even more difficult to force, and a person might as well have thrown himself at once down an abyss as to have attempted an attack upon it, so very steep was the descent. While we were busily at work under our penthouse in widening the breach, the enemy cast down upon us a quantity of burning pitch and resin, boiling water and blood, hot ashes and firebrands; but when they found we were not to be daunted by this, they rolled down huge pieces of rock upon the penthouse, by which it was shattered, and we were obliged to retire in order to construct stronger ones.

When these were finished, and we were again moving on with them towards the breaches we had made, four priests, with several distinguished personages, all well covered with shields, appeared on the battlements, and cried out to us, "As your only object is to obtain gold, come in here, we have it in abundance!" With these words they threw towards us seven diadems of very fine gold, besides various other trinkets, all of which they accompanied by a cloud of stones, arrows, and darts. As we had by this time made two considerable breaches, and it was growing dark and beginning to rain, we retreated to our camp for the remaining part of the day: our captain also sent orders to the cavalry not to quit their position on the level plain, but narrowly to watch the enemy's movements, and to keep their horses ready saddled and bridled.

The enemy continued their fearful yells during the whole of the night, with the discordant sound of shell-trumpets, drums, and screeching pipes. The next day, they said, we were all to be killed, for this had been promised them by their gods. The following morning early, when we again moved forward with our penthouses to widen the breaches, the enemy defended themselves right valiantly, and wounded five of our men. I myself received a heavy thrust from a lance, which completely pierced my armour, and I should certainly have lost my life on the spot if my cuirass had not been strongly quilted with cotton. Thus

I fortunately escaped with only a slight wound, and with my jacket considerably torn.

By this time it was mid-day, and rain fell in torrents, which was followed by so dense a fog that we could scarcely see each other; for as this township lay very high among the mountains, it either rained there, or the place was enveloped in a mist. Owing to the great darkness, our captain had ordered the men to desist from the attack; but, for myself, as I was well acquainted with the Mexican mode of warfare, I soon concluded, from the circumstance of the enemy's war music gradually dying away, and their yells becoming less frequent, that they were likewise desirous of retiring, on account of the fog. After a short time I could not count above 200 of the enemy's lances; so that I, with one of my companions, boldly entered one of the breaches, and we certainly did not encounter a greater number of the enemy than I had counted lances. In an instant they fell upon us, and we should undoubtedly have been killed if some Indians of Cinacatan had not hastened to our assistance and alarmed the rest of our troops, who now likewise forced their way in between the breaches into the fortress. As soon as the enemy espied our troops rushing in, they fled precipitately; the women and children ran off to the other declivity, which was the most difficult to reach; we, however, followed them closely, and took a number of them prisoners, besides thirty men. The township was now entirely in our possession, but we found nothing in it, with the exception of a few provisions, and we quitted the place almost immediately again. We then returned along the road leading to Cinacatan, and formed our camp on the banks of the river where at present Ciudad Real stands, which is also termed Chiapa de los Españoles. When we had arrived here, our captain liberated six of the women and a like number of the men, and despatched them to their countrymen with offers of peace, and also to assure them they had nothing further to fear from us,—on the contrary, we would liberate all the prisoners we had taken. This message met with a favorable reception, and ambassadors were sent to us next morning by the inhabitants, who now, for the second time, declared themselves vassals of our emperor, and, as we had promised, all the prisoners were instantly restored to their families.

After we had satisfactorily arranged all matters here, Luis Marin presented the township of Chamula to me as a commendary, for Cortes had expressly desired him to give me some valuable possession in the conquered countries. I always stood upon very good terms with Luis Marin, and he had not forgotten that I was the first man who forced

his way into the town. This place, according to the deeds I received from Cortes, was given to me in perpetuity, but I only enjoyed the rents which it produced for little more than eight years, at the end of which time Ciudad Real was founded, and my commendary became the property of the inhabitants. When I entered into possession of it, I desired father Juan to preach to the inhabitants, and to explain our holy religion to them, with which he willingly complied, and ordered an altar to be constructed in the town, on which he placed a cross and the image of the blessed Virgin. Fifteen of the inhabitants allowed themselves to be baptized, and the father said he hoped to God they might all become good Catholic Christians. I felt highly delighted with all this; for, as these people were my own property, I naturally took a more particular interest in their welfare.

Though Chamula had again submitted to our arms, the townships of Guegustitlan still obstinately held out, notwithstanding all our kind messages to the caziques; we had, therefore, no other resource left than to march against them, and subdue them by force of arms. Each of these townships (for there were three) was strongly situated, and we therefore left our allies, with the baggage, in the camp, our captain only taking the most nimble and active of the Spanish troops with him, besides 300 warriors of Cinacatan. The distance to Guegustitlan was sixteen miles; but the enemy had everywhere cut down trees and constructed barricades along the line of our march to obstruct the cavalry; however, with the assistance of our Indian friends, we soon cleared these obstacles out of our way, and it was not long before we attacked one of the three townships. The place was well fortified and filled with warriors fully equipped for war; we, nevertheless, stormed the town, although it was even more difficult of access than Chamula. The enemy had not waited to offer any resistance to our arms, and we found the town quite deserted by its inhabitants, who had also carried off all their store of provisions; but it was not long before our Indian friends brought in two of the inhabitants prisoners, whom our captain immediately liberated, desiring them to go and call their countrymen. We staid one whole day in this place, during which time the inhabitants of all three townships submitted themselves as vassals to our emperor, and presented us with a small quantity of gold and some quetzal feathers, which are of great value in this country.

After we had returned to our camp we deliberated whether or not we should follow up Cortes' instructions, and lay the foundations of a town in this neighbourhood. Many of us were in favour of doing so, but others, who had lucrative possessions in Guacasualco, were quite

opposed to it, and said we should have no shoes for the horses; that the most of us were wounded, and we were altogether too small in numbers to think of settling in a country so thickly populated: besides that, all the townships were strongly situated among steep mountains, inaccessible to our cavalry. But those who objected most to our founding a colony here were Luis Marin himself and Diego de Godoy, a very blustering sort of a man, both of whom felt more inclination to return to Guacasualco.

I have above spoken of a certain Alonso de Grado, who was a very turbulent fellow, though but a poor soldier. This man had managed to procure privately from Cortes a certain grant by which he was to have half the gold we should find in Chiapa when we had subjected this township. Grado now produced this document and claimed half of the gold found in the temples of this place, and of that which we had obtained from the inhabitants, altogether valued at about 15,000 pesos; but our captain maintained that, out of this gold, the value of the horses was to be deducted which had been killed in our recent campaign. This, added to other circumstances, gave rise to high words between the two, and Grado frequently made use of unbecoming expressions during the dispute; and the secretary Godoy, to make matters worse, now also put in his word, and things at length came to such a pass that Luis Marin lost all patience, and threw both these gentlemen into chains. After they had been in prison for about eight days, our captain sent Grado on his parole to Mexico, and also released Godoy, who had shown full contrition for his past behaviour. This was very impolitic on the part of Luis Marin as far as regarded himself, for Grado and Godoy now concocted measures together, and the latter wrote a letter to Cortes, in which he scandalized our captain in every possible manner. Alonso de Grado also requested me to draw up a letter to Cortes, in which he wished me to exculpate him in this affair, for he had been assured by Godoy that Cortes would believe me. I willingly complied with his request, and drew up a faithful account of the whole matter, but stated that no blame could be attached to Luis Marin. With these letters Grado set out for Mexico, after our captain had made him promise on oath to appear before Cortes within the space of eight days; for the distance from this place to Mexico by the road we had marched was 760 miles.

Our next step was to march to Cimatan, in order to punish its inhabitants, who, it will be remembered, killed two Spaniards on the occasion when Francisco Martin and myself so narrowly escaped. When we were on our march thither, and had arrived at no great distance from

Tapelola, we came to some large mountains, containing several dangerous passes, through which our march lay to this township; Luis Marin, therefore, sent to the caziques of this place, desiring them to clear the roads for us that our horses might pass along in greater safety. This they readily undertook to do; but even then it was with great difficulty our cavalry could pass through the defiles. From Tapelola we marched peaceably over the townships Silo, Suchiapa, and Coyumelapa, to Panguaxaya, and it was not until we approached the townships of Tecomayacatl and Ateapan, which then formed but one town, that matters began to assume a different aspect. These were the most populous townships in the province, and formed part of my commendary. As the inhabitants of themselves were very numerous, and had besides called in the assistance of their neighbours, they mustered a very considerable body of troops, and attacked us as we were crossing the deep river which flows through the midst of their town. Six Spaniards were wounded and three of our horses killed, the battle continuing very sharply for a length of time before we could reach the opposite shore and drive the enemy back, who set fire to the houses in their flight, and then escaped to the mountains. Here we rested for five days to cure our wounds, and we sent out frequent foraging parties who captured many a fine Indian female. We then forwarded a message to the inhabitants, inviting them to return to obedience, with which they instantly complied, and their wives and children were again restored to them. The secretary Godoy had indeed advised Luis Marin not to return the prisoners, but to mark them with the iron and retain them as slaves, a punishment to which all those were subject who had once acknowledged themselves vassals of our emperor, and afterwards revolted without any apparent reason. These people, Godoy maintained, had commenced hostilities with us from sheer obstinacy, and we ought at least to demand a sufficient number of slaves as a compensation for the loss of our three horses. For myself, I loudly protested against this, and said it would be unjust to punish these people who had freely submitted again to our arms. At length Godoy and myself got to high words about this matter, which ended in our drawing swords and wounding each other, when our friends interfered and brought about a reconciliation between us. Luis Marin, who was, upon the whole, a very kind-hearted man, was convinced of the justness of my observation, and ordered all the prisoners to be returned to the caziques, and so we departed from them in perfect peace.

From this place we marched towards Cimatlan and Talatupan. At the entrance of this township the Indians had constructed, on the top

of a hill, a species of rampart, with loop-holes, beyond which lay a marsh of considerable extent. When we had arrived up to this outwork, the enemy suddenly showered their arrows upon us, wounding above twenty of our men and killing two horses; and if we had not made a hasty retreat our loss might have been very serious.

The Indians of this province excel as archers, and fly their arrows with so much strength that they will pierce a jacket doubly quilted with cotton.

After this momentary attack upon us, the Indians drew back to the marshes, and we remained two whole days in this place, during which time we despatched several messages to them; but as they obstinately refused to submit, and were securely posted between the swamps, where our horse could not manœuvre, nor would it have been an easy matter for the foot to have got at them, and as we ourselves were quite tired of roving about, we unanimously determined to march back to Guacasualco. We took our route through the townships of Guimango, Nacaxu, Xuica, Teotitan-Copilco, and several others, all belonging to the province of Chontalpa. We then crossed the rivers Ayagualulco, and Tonala, and we arrived safely in Guacasualco, when the owners of those horses which had been killed in this campaign were reimbursed for their loss from the gold collected in Chiapa and Chamula.

In the meantime Alonso de Grado reached Mexico, and presented himself to Cortes; who, when he learnt the real state of the case, grew excessively angry with this officer, and said to him, "It appears thus, Señor Alonso, that you cannot live in peace with any one! I must earnestly advise you to alter your bad disposition; if not, I will give you 3000 pesos, and send you off to Cuba. I cannot suffer you to go on in this manner any longer!" Alonso de Grado then humbly begged his pardon, and expressed his sorrow for what had happened, so that our general, and even Luis Marin, became reconciled to him shortly after.

I must now conclude this chapter, in order to acquaint the reader with what was going on at the imperial court in Spain respecting the bishop of Burgos.

CHAPTER CLXVII.

How our agents in Spain brought certain accusations against the bishop of Burgos, and what further happened.

THE reader must have seen, from what I have stated in former chapters, that the bishop of Burgos and archbishop of Rosana, Don Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca, favoured Diego Velasquez in every way, and that, on the other hand, he took every opportunity of thwarting the designs of Cortes and of all of us. But now, by divine permission of the Lord Jesus Christ, the holy father Adrian[35] was elected Pope in the year 1521; and as this happened at the time he was governor of Spain, our agents repaired to the town of Vittoria, where he was then residing, to kiss his holiness's feet. There arrived with them, at the same time, in Vittoria, a German gentleman of distinction named La Chau,[36] who had been despatched thither by the emperor to congratulate the new Pope. As this gentleman had heard a great deal of the heroic deeds of Cortes and his troops, how we had conquered New Spain, what great and memorable services we had rendered to his majesty, and of the many thousands of Indians we had converted to Christianity, he supplicated his holiness to investigate the matter of dispute between Cortes and the bishop of Burgos. To this his holiness consented, and he immediately took the matter in hand, which he did the more earnestly, as the complaints of our agents had emboldened several other men of distinction to prefer charges of injustice and oppression against the bishop. This bishop was, upon the whole, detested, as, in his capacity of president of the council of the Indies, during the emperor's absence in Flanders, he had governed in the most arbitrary manner; notwithstanding this, it was a matter of no small difficulty for our agents to reject him as the judge in our own affairs.

Francisco de Montejo, Diego de Ordas, the licentiate Francisco Nuñez, and Martin Cortes, were purposely staying at Valladolid to wait an opportunity of preferring their charges against the bishop. In this place they found great protection and favour from several distinguished cavaliers and grandees of the court, particularly from the duke of Bejar, so that our agents were emboldened to maintain with great firmness that they could not acknowledge the bishop as judge in their affairs, for which they gave the following reasons:

Firstly, Diego Velasquez had given the bishop of Burgos a very lucrative commendary in Cuba, the gold mines of which the former worked with the inhabitants of the island, and sent the produce to

Spain for the bishop. Not one of the townships of that island had Velasquez set apart for the emperor, although he was so greatly indebted to him.

Secondly. In the year 1517 one hundred and ten of us, under an officer named Cordoba, had fitted out an armament at our own expense, with which we had discovered and explored the coast of New Spain. The circumstances relative to the expedition had been so represented to his majesty by the bishop of Burgos, as if Velasquez had fitted out the armament at his own expense, and had discovered the country himself, although he had had nothing to do with it either one way or the other.

Thirdly. It was not until this expedition returned that Velasquez sent out one of his nephews, named Juan Grijalva, with a small armament to make further discoveries. Grijalva returned to Cuba with above 20,000 pesos' worth of gold, the greater part of which found its way into the pocket of the bishop, and not a fraction of it was paid into the royal treasury.

Fourthly. When Cortes, during the progress of the conquest of New Spain, despatched Montejo and Puertocarrero, cousin to the earl of Medellin, to Spain, with the sun of gold, the moon of silver, and the gold dust, with various kinds of jewels and trinkets as a present to his majesty, accompanied by despatches from Cortes and all the Conquistadores, containing a full account of our transactions in the new world, the bishop refused to give our agents an audience, and abused them in a most shameful manner, calling them traitors and the agents of a traitor, and took away from them the present we had destined for his majesty. He suppressed our despatches to the emperor, and sent his majesty an account which was the very opposite of ours, and had represented matters in such a way as though everything came from his creature Diego Velasquez. But he did not stop here; for he retained the greater part of the valuable present himself, and when Puertocarrero begged permission of the bishop to repair in person to his majesty in Flanders, he cast him into prison, where he died.

Fifthly. The bishop had forbidden the two chief harbour-masters of Seville to allow any vessels having on board troops, ammunition, or other matters for Cortes, to leave that harbour.

Sixthly. The bishop, without authority from his majesty, had wished to give the most important appointments to men who neither possessed the requisite talents nor merited to fill such offices: for instance, the government of New Spain he had conferred upon Christobal de Tapia, who could not even have been intrusted with an inferior

command, and whose only claim to that office was his marriage with Doña Petronella de Fonseca, a niece of the bishop, and a near relative of Velasquez.

And lastly. The bishop lent a favorable ear to all the false statements of Velasquez's agents, while he suppressed, distorted, and garbled the true and faithful accounts which Cortes and the rest of us despatched to his majesty.

These and other complaints against the bishop, which were accompanied by undeniable proofs were properly drawn up by our agents, and with these they repaired to Saragossa, where his holiness was staying, to whom they handed over this document and challenged the bishop as an unfit person to be judge in these matters.

After his holiness had perused this representation of the case, and had convinced himself that there was very little truth with regard to the enormous expenses to which Velasquez pretended to have put himself, and that upon the whole he had only had the interest of his patron and the bishop at heart; but that Cortes, on the other hand, had had the interest of the emperor in view, his holiness not only declared that the bishop was unfit to preside as judge in the dispute between Cortes and Velasquez, but superseded him as president of the council of the Indies.

His holiness at the same time appointed Cortes governor of New Spain, and decreed that Velasquez was to be reimbursed for his expenses in fitting out the armament. His holiness also sent several papal bulls with a number of indulgences for the hospitallers and the churches of New Spain, and addressed a separate letter to Cortes, and the whole of us Conquistadores, in which his holiness admonished us to use our utmost endeavours to convert the Indians to Christianity; to abolish all human sacrifices and other abominations from the country, and to gain the friendship of the people: hereby we should merit the highest rewards from his majesty, and his holiness, as the pastor of our souls, would supplicate the Almighty in prayer to send a blessing on our endeavours in the service of Christianity. This letter was likewise accompanied by other bulls, by which absolution was granted us for all the sins we had committed during the conquest.

After this very favorable decision of his holiness, both as supreme pontiff and governor of Spain, our agents themselves wrote to his majesty, who had just arrived from Flanders,[37] and inclosed certain papers which had been drawn up by his holiness respecting the subject-matter. His majesty, after making the most minute inquiries into the affair, confirmed the decision of the pope, appointed Cortes governor of New

Spain, and also ordered that Velasquez should be reimbursed the expenses of the expedition. But the emperor even went further than this, and deprived Velasquez of the government of Cuba, because he had fitted out the armament under Narvaez for New Spain without his permission, and in opposition to the commands of the royal court of audience at St. Domingo, and of the Hieronymite brotherhood; also because he had refused to obey the orders of the auditor Vasquez de Aillon, and had even had the audacity to throw him into prison, though he had been expressly despatched to Cuba by order of the royal court of audience to forbid the armament leaving this island.

When the bishop of Burgos was informed of the decision to which his holiness and his majesty had come, he fell ill from excessive vexation, quitted the court and retired to his country seat at Toro. His brother, Don Antonio de Fonseca,[38] lord of Coca and Alaexos, tried all in his power to get him reinstated into his late office, but all his endeavours proved fruitless with the emperor..

Thus, all in a moment, everything terminated favorably for Cortes, but the instability of good fortune soon began to show itself, for now Narvaez, Christobal de Tapia, and the soldier Cardenas brought heavy accusations against him. To all of which was added the charges preferred against our general by the pilot Umbria, whom Cortes had sentenced to have his legs cut off on the occasion when Cermenno and Escudero were hung for a conspiracy they had formed against his life.

CHAPTER CLXVIII.

How Narvaez, Christobal de Tapia, the pilot Umbria, and the soldier Cardenas, bring heavy accusations against Cortes, at the instigation of the bishop of Burgos, and what judgment his majesty pronounced.

After the pope and the emperor, as I have just related, had pronounced judgment in favour of Cortes, Panfilo de Narvaez and Christobal de Tapia arrived in Spain. They were accompanied by the soldier Cardenas and the pilot Umbria, and immediately repaired to the bishop of Burgos at Toro, and begged of him to aid in the accusations which they had determined to bring against Cortes before his majesty. As nothing could be more welcome to the bishop than this, he promised to lend them every support, and upon his advice they joined Velasquez's agents, named Bernardino Velasquez, Benito

Martin, and Manuel de Rojas, and presented themselves to his majesty, before whom they preferred the following charges against Cortes:

Firstly. Diego Velasquez had sent out three several armaments for the discovery and colonization of New Spain, in which he had expended large sums of money. Of one of these expeditions he had appointed Cortes commander-in-chief, but the latter had deserted with the whole armament and had refused all further obedience to him.

Secondly. When Diego Velásquez upon this despatched Narvaez with eighteen vessels, 1300 foot, a considerable body of horse, musketeers, and crossbow-men to New Spain, Cortes not only refused to acknowledge the papers in which the president of the council of the Indies conferred the government of the country on Narvaez, but he had even attacked the latter with his troops, killed several of his officers, and then, after Narvaez had lost an eye in the battle, took him with the whole of his men prisoners.

Thirdly. When upon this the bishop of Burgos conferred the appointment of governor of New Spain upon Christobal de Tapia, and the latter repaired in person thither to enter upon the government in the name of his majesty, Cortes again refused all obedience and forced Tapia to leave the country.

Fourthly. Cortes had demanded in the name of his majesty large quantities of gold from all the townships throughout New Spain, which the inhabitants accordingly had brought him, but he had put the whole of it in his private purse.

Fifthly. Cortes had taken an equal fifth with his majesty of the booty found in Mexico, which had created great discontent among the men.

Sixthly. He had tortured Quauhtemoctzin and other caziques, in order to extort more gold from them.

Seventhly. Cortes never divided any of the gold among his troops, but kept all to himself.

Eighthly. Cortes was building himself palaces and houses with fortifications, which had the extent of whole townships; the inhabitants of the surrounding districts were compelled to labour in the construction of the edifices, and were obliged to fetch large cedar trees and enormous blocks of stone from the most distant parts.

Ninethly. He had poisoned Francisco de Garay in order that he might get possession of his vessels and of his troops.

Besides these they brought many similar charges against Cortes, so that his majesty was excessively annoyed, imagining that all they said was true, and he would not listen to any more, telling them that these accusations were quite sufficient.

During this audience, Narvaez, with his stentorian voice, was heard to express himself as follows: "Your majesty can easily imagine how matters went with me on the night that Cortes attacked and defeated me; for when his men thrust out one of my eyes, and I found my quarters all in flames, I quickly secreted the deed by which I held my appointment from your majesty, between my cuirass; but one of Cortes' officers took these papers forcibly from me, nor could I obtain possession of them again. They even spread the rumour that I had no appointment at all, but that the papers they took from me were bonds of some kind or other."

The emperor could not help laughing at what Narvaez said, but promised that he and the others should have justice done them. His majesty then appointed a commission from the gentlemen of his court and of his privy council, in whose honesty he could place the most implicit confidence to make inquiries into the several charges, and to pronounce judgment upon them. The names of the gentlemen who composed this commission were: Mercurio Catarinario,[39] high chancellor of Italy; señor la Chau; the doctor de la Rocha; Hernando de Vega, who was lord of Grajales and comendador-mayor of Castile; the doctor Lorenzo Galindez de Caravajal, and the licentiate Vargas, who was treasurer-general of Castile. His majesty desired these gentlemen to make the most minute investigation respecting the dispute between Velasquez and Cortes, and also into the present charges which were preferred against the latter; and particularly recommended them to have no regard to persons, but to give their decision in conformity with strict justice. These gentlemen then assembled in the house of the high chancellor, and ordered Narvaez, with his three companions and the agents of Velasquez into their presence. In the same way they cited before them Martin Cortes, the licentiate Nuñez, Montejo, and Ordas. These latter gentlemen being made acquainted with the several charges which had been prepared against Cortes, replied to the following effect:

That with regard to the assertion, that Velasquez was the first discoverer of New Spain, and that he had expended large sums of money in the discovery, it was entirely false, as the whole merit of it was due to Cordoba, who had fitted out the armament at his own expense. Velasquez, on the contrary, in many circumstances connected with this expedition, had laid himself open to the imputation of guilt, as he had tried all in his power to induce Cordoba and his companions, for certain considerations, to land at the Guanajas islands, in order to carry away forcibly from thence a great number of the inhabitants as slaves, to

work his mines in Cuba; of all of which our agents produced undeniable proofs. Neither could Velasquez, they continued, claim any merit to himself when he subsequently despatched his relative Grijalva to New Spain, as he had not commissioned him to form any settlements, but he merely desired him to carry on a trade of barter with the Indians. Nor had Velasquez put himself to any great expense on this occasion, as the greater part of the expenses in fitting out the armament had been borne by the officers and soldiers themselves, one of whom, Francisco de Montejo, now stood before the honorable commission. From this expedition Grijalva had returned to Cuba with 20,000 pesos worth of gold, of which, however, Velasquez had not paid one farthing into the royal treasury, but claimed the whole amount for himself, and sent it to the bishop of Burgos, to obtain further favours from him. In the same way he had bestowed upon the bishop great numbers of Indians to work his gold mines in Cuba, without his ever so much as thinking to set any of the townships apart for the crown. Of all this they likewise produced undeniable proofs.

If Velasquez, continued our agents, did give Cortes the chief command of the armament he afterwards fitted out, his appointment was certainly by divine ordinance, and it proved most fortunate for the emperor's interest, as every other general must have succumbed to the immense bodies of the enemy which everywhere opposed his march into the interior of the country. However, Velasquez's intention in fitting out this expedition was not to make any conquests, or form any settlements, but merely to carry on a trade of barter with the Indians; in proof of which, they could produce the original papers, containing his instructions. Cortes had remained in that country, and founded a colony there, because his troops had insisted on it, and because he himself was convinced that it would be both serviceable to God and to his majesty. Respecting all these circumstances, Cortes' troops drew up an account, which they had despatched to his majesty, with all the gold they had collected up to that moment; indeed Cortes and his men were never for a moment forgetful of the deep veneration and the dutiful obedience which they owed to their monarch. Our agents then gave a long description of the great partiality which the president of the council of the Indies had undisguisedly shown on every occasion for Velasquez; how he had taken all the gold, with our despatches, from our agents, and put half of the former into his own pocket; how he had calumniated us to his majesty, purposely omitted to mention what great services we had rendered to the crown, suppressed real facts, and altogether placed things in a false light. But this was not all; for when our agents wished to

repair in person to Flanders, in order to throw themselves at his majesty's feet, and give him a faithful account of all the circumstances, the bishop cast one of those gentlemen, named Puertocarrero, a relative of the earl of Medellin, into prison, where he died. With the same hostile feeling and party spirit the bishop had issued peremptory orders that neither ammunition, troops, nor anything else destined for Cortes, should leave the port of Seville, and every obstacle was to be laid in his way to thwart his designs. He had not hesitated to term Cortes and the whole of his men a pack of traitors; and the only cause of his hatred was his own interested connexion with Velasquez, and the intended marriage of his niece with Christobal de Tapia, in consideration of which the latter was to receive the appointment of governor of New Spain.

In proof of this and other matters, our agents produced copies of letters we had written to his majesty, besides other important documents; so that Velasquez's party were unable to confute them on any point.

With respect to the armament of Narvaez, continued our agents, Velasquez had fully deserved punishment of death, as he had fitted it out against Cortes without any authority from his majesty, and against the wishes and express orders of the royal court of audience at St. Domingo, and of the Hieronymite brotherhood, whom the emperor had appointed viceroys of the West Indies. Diego Velasquez had, upon the whole, troubled himself very little about his majesty, but had always applied to the president of the council of the Indies. In his hatred he had forgotten the true interests of the crown, for which reason he had continually bred disturbances among the troops in New Spain, though it was so necessary towards the conquest of the country, and the conversion of the inhabitants, to maintain the strictest union among the men. Velasquez had gone so far in his refractory and disrespectful behaviour towards the authorities of St. Domingo, that he had ordered to be imprisoned and sent back to Cuba the licentiate Vasquez de Aillon, whom the royal court of audience had expressly despatched to New Spain to admonish Narvaez not to commence hostilities with Cortes. As Narvaez was now himself present, and had had the audacity to accuse Cortes and his troops of *crimen læsæ majestatis*, they must retort this charge upon him, and they demanded that punishment of death might be pronounced against him, as the moment he landed in New Spain he sent word to Motecusuma that his only object for visiting his dominions was to liberate him from prison, and to hang Cortes, with the whole of his men, as traitors. By this he had caused

an insurrection throughout the whole country, which up to that moment had enjoyed perfect tranquillity. This conduct was the less excusable in him, since Cortes, immediately upon Narvaez's arrival in Vera Cruz, had written a most polite letter to him, and requested him to produce his appointment, as, if he possessed such an instrument, signed by his majesty, Cortes was ready to acknowledge his authority. To this Narvaez not only refused to reply, but had called Cortes and the whole of his men traitors, proclaimed war against them, and even declared them outlaws. Notwithstanding all this, Cortes had repeatedly offered Narvaez peace, and earnestly requested him not to create a rebellion in the country; for this was threatened by his conduct, and New Spain would certainly be lost again to the Spanish crown. Cortes had even offered to share the government of New Spain between himself and Narvaez, and to allow the latter his choice of the provinces. But even to this Narvaez had returned no answer; so that Cortes found himself compelled to pursue a more determined course, and to demand satisfaction of him for having imprisoned a royal auditor. Cortes at length proposed a personal interview with him, which Narvaez had certainly accepted, but this never took place, for his intentions were to seize Cortes during the conference. This could be proved by Duero, who now stood before the honorable commissioners, as at that time he held a command under Narvaez, and had himself warned Cortes of the latter's treacherous designs against his life.

Neither could Velasquez's agents confute any part of these statements; our agents therefore continued: With regard to the expedition of Garay, Cortes had not been the cause of its failure, but the inhabitants of Panuco, who had risen up in arms against the troops, the whole of whom, with Garay, would certainly have been cut off to a man, if the latter had not, in the imminent danger in which he was placed, begged assistance of Cortes; for which purpose Garay had repaired in person to Mexico, where he met with the kindest reception from Cortes; but that a few days after he caught a violent cold, of which he died, and not of poison, as had been imputed to Cortes, who could have had no cause whatever to adopt such a course, even if he had in any way feared Garay, as the latter did not possess the requisite talents for command, and had himself caused great discontent among his troops, who even rebelled against him, on account of his having marched them immediately upon landing to a pestilential part of the country, full of swamps and uninhabitable, on account of the vermin with which it swarmed. When his men therefore heard of the riches of Mexico and the liberality of Cortes, they dispersed of their own accord, and traversed the country

like so many banditti, plundered and burned the townships, and forcibly carried off the females, until the natives rose up against them in a body. Cortes' only reason for despatching several of his officers to Garay was that they might assist him with their advice and authority; to peruse his papers, and see how far they interfered with the powers which Cortes had obtained from his majesty. When Garay found that the whole of his men had deserted, and that the greater number of his vessels were lost, he repaired in person to Mexico, to beg assistance from Cortes. On his road thither he everywhere met with the heartiest reception; in Tezcuco a splendid banquet took place in his honour, and when he had approached within a short distance of Mexico, Cortes himself came out to meet him, and quartered him in one of his own palaces. They became so friendly with each other, that the preliminaries of a marriage were settled between a daughter of Cortes and the eldest son of Garay, and in consideration of this union it was particularly stipulated that Cortes was to assist Garay in an expedition to the river Palmas. But because Garay soon after fell suddenly ill, and it pleased the Almighty in his wisdom to call him to another world, Velasquez's agents had thought proper to reproach Cortes with his death! who, however, had given sufficient proofs of the deep sorrow he felt at his untimely end, by the funeral pomp with which he honoured his last remains, and the mourning which he put on; besides which, the surgeons had stated on oath that Garay died of pleurisy.

Cortes had likewise been reproached for subtracting an equal fifth with the emperor from all the gold that was collected; but to this the answer was, that the troops had unanimously agreed to allow him such a share of the gold when they elected him captain-general and chief justice of New Spain, with the proviso, however, that this should only remain in force until his majesty should otherwise dispose. For the rest, Cortes was in every way entitled to this portion, as he had embarked his whole fortune in the service of his majesty, and on different occasions had paid large sums out of his own private purse, as, for instance, in the expedition against Panuco alone he had expended above 60,000 pesos; moreover, it would have been impossible for Cortes to have sent those valuable presents for his majesty to Spain unless the troops had allowed him this fifth.

Against this justification of Cortes' conduct, Velasquez's agents were also unable to bring in a word, and our agents continued:

Cortes had likewise been reproached for giving his men so trifling a share of the gold; but how was it possible for him to give more than he possessed; for the conquest of the city of Mexico had produced very

little gold, as the Tlascallans and other auxiliaries had carried off the greater part of the booty. It was likewise a false accusation against Cortes to say he had put Quauhtemoctzin and other caziques to the torture, in order to extort more gold from them. Cortes indeed had been quite averse to this inhuman act, but the officers of the crown had insisted on it, in order to force from them a confession as to where they had concealed Motecusuma's treasure.

It was certainly true, continued our agents, that Cortes was building extensive and splendid mansions, but in this he had the emperor's interest entirely at heart, for they were all built in his majesty's name. It was, however, altogether false that he ordered the wood and stone to be brought to Mexico from distant parts, for the wood grew near to the city, and was conveyed thither by water; and as for the stones, they had, in all truth, a sufficient supply in the place itself, from the numerous temples which had been pulled down. Velasquez's agents had altogether misrepresented things, with regard to the system of building in Mexico. Cortes had certainly one great advantage with regard to labourers, for he had only to say the word, and Quauhtemoctzin readily furnished him with the necessary workmen from the surrounding townships; but this was quite in accordance with the custom of the country, where the subjects are always obliged to build the houses for their chiefs.

Narvaez's accusation, said our agents, is equally unfounded, when he says that Alonso de Avila took the papers from him containing his appointment, and had refused to return them, or that he had said these papers were nothing but bonds. Cortes never saw Narvaez's appointment, or gave any one orders to demand it of him; though it is a fact that all the papers which were found upon Narvaez were three bonds or securities for some horses which he had sold upon trust.

The complaints of the pilot Umbria and of the soldier Cardenas were mere fabrications, continued our agents. The first had not had his feet cut off without cause, but conformably to a just sentence, for having, with two of his companions, who had suffered death for it, deserted his general, and seized one of the vessels, with the intention of running off with her to Cuba.

Cardenas, who complains that he had no share of the first gold we collected, which was sent to his majesty, had himself, with several others, signed his name to a certain document, by which he yielded up all claim to his share, in order that the whole of the gold might be forwarded as a present to the emperor. Nevertheless, Cortes had given him 300 pesos from his own private purse, in order to induce him to

return with his wife and family to New Spain. With this sum of money he had been richly renumerated, for he was quite unfit for military service, and besides this was not altogether right in his head.

Our agents further continued to say, that they were quite surprised accusations should be preferred against Cortes and his troops for having marched against Narvaez, defeated his army, taken his officers prisoners, and burnt his quarters to the ground! They had sufficiently explained above what Narvaez's conduct had been in New Spain, and no person could deny that he had compelled Cortes to take up arms against him: and it appeared like a judgment from heaven that Cortes, with only 266 men, without cavalry, or cannon, or muskets, should have overthrown Narvaez, with a body of 1300 men, who were fully equipped for war, besides having a fine park of artillery. New Spain would undoubtedly have been lost again to the Spanish crown, if Narvaez had entered upon the government of that vast territory. It would have been the same case if Christobal de Tapia had been allowed to assume that dignity, who, however, had had sufficient common sense to see the difficulty of his position, and had considered himself very fortunate in selling off to Cortes the horses and negroes which he brought over with him for a good price, and to return from whence he came. However, if he had repaired to Mexico, and had shown his appointment to Cortes, the latter would certainly have obeyed him; but the cavaliers and the authorities of the different towns would never have consented to the chief command of New Spain passing from the hands of Cortes into those of an individual, whom every one at the first sight could see had not the requisite talents to fill an office of so much importance. Those cavaliers and distinguished personages had even drawn up petitions to his majesty, in which they humbly supplicated him to withdraw the appointment of Tapia.

Here our agents closed the defence; and as the complainants had nothing further to say, and the pleadings of both parties had lasted five days, the commission closed the court, and retired to deliberate on their verdict, which ran as follows:

The commissioners were of opinion that Cortes and the other true and only Conquistadores of New Spain had on every occasion proved themselves loyal and faithful servants of his majesty. Great good fortune had certainly attended all their undertakings, but the courage and intrepidity which they had displayed in the terrible and bloody battles with the Indians, the victory which they gained over the large body of troops under Narvaez with a handful of men, fully merited this good fortune. The commissioners declared that Velasquez was not justified

in commencing his suit respecting the government of New Spain; but that he was at liberty to sue Cortes in the proper law courts for the monies he had expended in fitting out the armament.

They confirmed the pope's appointment of Cortes as governor of New Spain; every division of land which he had made should stand good, and further power should be granted to him to distribute the lands in future, according to the best of his judgment; as it was quite evident that in everything he had done up to the present moment he had strove to promote the service of God, and the best interests of his majesty; and it was therefore to be supposed he would continue to do so in future.

With respect to the accusations brought against Cortes concerning Garay's death, the commissioners could not pronounce judgment at present, but would thoroughly investigate this matter on some future occasion: neither could they at present come to any decision with regard to Narvaez's charge that his papers had been taken away from him, as the defendant Alonso de Avila was then a prisoner in France; but they would apply to the French king for his release in order to examine him. With respect to the pilot Umbria and the soldier Cardenas, the commissioners would petition his majesty to grant them each a commendary in New Spain that would produce them an annual rent of 1000 pesos.

With regard to the Conquistadores themselves, they would propose that lucrative commendaries should be bestowed upon them all, and that they should take precedence in the churches and in all other places.

These several decisions were then drawn up in proper form, and despatched to the royal court at Valladolid to receive his majesty's confirmation.

His majesty not only confirmed the decision to which the commissioners had come, but issued other royal letters by which Cortes was empowered to banish from New Spain all deserters and those Spaniards who strolled about the country like vagabonds, as they obstructed the conversion of the Indians to Christianity. Further, all lawyers were forbidden to settle in New Spain for a certain number of years to come, for they only created law-suits, quarrels, and dissensions among the inhabitants.

These royal letters were given at the court of Valladolid on the 17th of May, in the year one thousand five hundred and so many years,[40] countersigned by the above commissioners, by Don Garcia de Padilla, and by the royal secretary Don Francisco de los Cobos, who subsequently became comendador-mayor of Leon. Besides all this, his majesty wrote letters to Cortes and all of us the veteran Conquistadores,

in which he expressed his unqualified satisfaction with the great and excellent services we had rendered the crown.

About this time also, Ferdinand king of Hungary and king of the Romans wrote a letter to Cortes, in which he thanked him for the beautiful present of gold ornaments and jewels which he had sent him, adding, that he had heard, with much pleasure, of the great services he had above all things rendered to God, and then to his master and brother the emperor, and to the whole of Christendom, and that he should feel happy at all times to promote his interests with the emperor. Thus much he thought himself indebted to a man who possessed so many noble qualities, and who had rendered himself so meritorious; in like manner he wished to express his high esteem for his brave companions in arms.

This letter besides passed many high encomiums on the Conquistadores, and I still remember that it was signed with the words, *I the king and Infante of Castile,* countersigned by the private secretary Castillejo. I read the letter myself two or three times at Mexico, for Cortes shewed it to me in order to convince me of the great esteem in which we the true Conquistadores were held by his majesty.

As soon as these royal mandates and letters had been put into the hands of our agents, they despatched them in all haste to Mexico by a cousin of Cortes named Rodrigo de Paz, who was accompanied by Francisco de las Casas, a nobleman of Estramadura, and also a relative of our general. These gentlemen embarked in an excellent sailing vessel, and had a most favorable voyage. They stopped on their way at Cuba, and there, under sound of trumpet, published the decision which his majesty had come to in favour of Cortes, and they then demanded of Velasquez an account of the monies which had been expended in fitting out the armament. The governor of Cuba, however, took the unfavorable termination of his suit so to heart, that he fell ill and died shortly after very poor and unhappy.

In order to save myself the trouble of recurring to these matters, I must observe that Francisco de Montejo and Diego de Ordas did not forget to profit by their stay at the imperial court, and their endeavours proved very successful. Montejo was appointed governor and chief-justice of Yucatan and Cozumel, and was allowed to assume the Don before his name; and Diego de Ordas was confirmed in his New Spanish possessions, received a commendary of the order of St. Jago, and was allowed to assume the volcano of Huexotzinco in his escutcheon.

After these high honours had been conferred upon them, both these gentlemen returned to Mexico, though Ordas, after a lapse of three

years, again returned to Spain, and obtained permission from the emperor to subdue the country on the river Marannon; he accordingly fitted out an armament for this purpose, but lost both his property and his life in the expedition.

When the bishop of Burgos found that everything had terminated in our favour, and heard of the great honours which his majesty had bestowed upon Cortes and upon all the Conquistadores, he naturally concluded that the gentlemen who had formed the commission of inquiry must have soon seen through all his doings with the governor of Cuba, and have been convinced that he had kept back all the gold which we had sent for his majesty to Spain, and that he had suppressed all mention of the great services we had rendered to the crown. These reflections preyed so hard upon his mind, that, like his creature Diego Velasquez, he fell dangerously ill, in which miserable state he had the additional vexation to see his nephew Don Alonso de Fonseca appointed to the archbishopric of Santiago, on which he had himself calculated.

I must now return to Rodrigo de Paz and Francisco de las Casas, who were sent to New Spain with the despatches containing Cortes' appointment of governor. They made their entry into Mexico in the most splendid manner, after which feasts and rejoicings took place, and couriers were despatched to every part of the country where Spaniards resided, to spread the happy news.

The gentlemen who had brought these despatches, and other persons who had accompanied them from Medellin were not forgotten by Cortes. Francisco de las Casas he appointed a captain, and afterwards bestowed upon him the productive township of Anguitlan. Rodrigo de Paz was likewise presented with extensive and lucrative commendaries, besides that Cortes appointed him his private secretary and major-domo. This man gained so much influence that he ruled all those about him, and even Cortes himself. There was not a single person who had come to New Spain with Rodrigo de Paz on this occasion that was not handsomely rewarded; even the captain of the vessel in which they had arrived received so large a sum of money from Cortes that he returned to Spain a rich man.

I must now answer some questions which were put to me by a few gentlemen who had read this account; namely, how I, who was at that time in the interior of New Spain, and certainly occupied very differently than in relating what was going on in the other hemisphere, could vouch for the truth of what I had written of the occurrences which then took place in Spain; of the declaration of his holiness, of the

accusations which were preferred against Cortes, and his defence before the royal commission by our agents, and of other matters?

My answer to them was, that, besides myself, the whole of my companions the veteran Conquistadores were duly informed of every circumstance. We had only to read the four or five accounts which our agents despatched to us in New Spain, to convince us how warmly they had our interest at heart; though I indeed remarked, as soon as I had perused these despatches, that all the endeavours of our agents were only exerted in behalf of Cortes and of themselves, and that we others, who had undergone all the fatigues and perils to place Cortes in that high and meritorious position, would have to toil to the last day of our lives. However, we must pray to God mercifully to remember us, and to instil the thoughts into our emperor's mind likewise of rewarding us according to our merits, which we may fully hope for from his majesty, who is so good a catholic.

CHAPTER CLXIX.

Of Cortes' plans after he had obtained the appointment of governor of New Spain; the way in which he distributes the Indians; and of other matters.

I and other of the most experienced and deserving of the veteran Conquistadores had always made sure that, as soon as Cortes should receive the appointment of governor of New Spain, he would remember the day when he set sail from Cuba, and that he would bring back to his mind the great troubles by which he was immediately after surrounded, and that he would have remembered all those of the men who, soon after he had landed with his troops in New Spain, had procured him the appointment of captain-general and chief justice of the country, and have borne in mind that we never for a moment left his side in all the subsequent battles and dangers. By heavens! he ought never to have forgotten any one of us,—we who always took his part, who exerted ourselves to the utmost for him on the occasion when a portion of the troops clamoured to return to Vera Cruz, and strove hard to persuade him to abandon all thoughts of the campaign against Mexico, on account of the vast power of this state and the great strength of its metropolis. We were the same men who marched with him into Mexico, who assisted him in taking the powerful Motecusuma prisoner in the midst of his warriors, who lent him such efficient aid

against Narvaez, and then instantly marched back with him to Mexico to the assistance of Alvarado; the same men who fought the terrific battles on the disastrous retreat from this city, and who had to mourn the loss of so many of their brave companions on that night of sorrows; the men by whose valour the memorable battle was gained on the plains of Otumpan; who again put down the insurrections in the provinces, conquered all the large townships which lay around the lake, and subdued the country; who rallied round his person when a conspiracy was set on foot by Villafaña and others to put him to death; who patiently endured the indescribable fatigues and hardships of the ninety-three days' siege of Mexico, during which time we had night and day encountered the attacks of an infuriated enemy until at length we placed him in possession of that strong city. We remained faithful to him when Christobal de Tapia arrived in New Spain with the appointment of governor. We wrote three several times to his majesty in praise of the great services he had rendered to the crown, extolling his loyalty to the skies, and begging of his majesty to confer upon him the appointment of governor. I will not even mention the many other great services which we rendered to our general; but certainly, after he had obtained the government of New Spain, he ought to have remembered the brave and courageous men who also, subsequent to the conquest of Mexico, made those severe campaigns to Colima, Zacatula, and Panuco, and those of the troops who from extreme poverty were obliged to relinquish the settlement founded by Alvarado at Tutepec.

We had altogether shared badly in the division of the Indians, and miserable districts of the country had been allotted to us, although his majesty had so often desired Cortes to reward our meritorious conduct, and to give us the preference in all matters. In all his letters which he wrote to his agents in Spain he ought never to have omitted mentioning our names with unbounded praise, and ought to have made it a point of obtaining from his majesty, for ourselves and children, the preference in all official appointments in New Spain: but he never gave this a thought; and on both occasions, the one when he obtained the appointment of governor, and the other when he went to Spain himself and became Marquis of Oaxaca, he only strove to further his own ends, and he forgot his brave companions in arms. Indeed, the most sensible and intelligent of the Conquistadores were quite of opinion that nothing would have been juster on the part of Cortes, and nothing more practicable at that time, than to have divided the whole of New Spain into five equal parts: one fifth, containing the best townships, to have been set apart for the crown; a second fifth for the churches,

hospitals, and cloisters, and for gifts which his majesty might think proper of bestowing on those men who had distinguished themselves in the Italian campaigns or elsewhere; the three remaining fifths to have been divided among the whole of the true Conquistadores, according to their respective stations and merits, and this in perpetuity. At that time his majesty would have consented to such a division, as the whole of the conquest of New Spain never cost the crown anything, and his majesty himself had altogether a very imperfect notion of the country. Besides which, his majesty was then still in Flanders, and would have been pleased to know the country was in the hands of such faithful and courageous subjects.

But nothing of all this ever entered Cortes' mind, while our condition was daily growing worse; and at present there are even many of us veteran Conquistadores who have not the common necessaries of life! What will become of our children which we shall leave behind? But enough of all this; let us now see to whom Cortes distributed the townships.

The first persons who were rewarded by the governor were Francisco de las Casas and Rodrigo de Paz, with the royal factor, the inspector, and treasurer, who had come from Spain with those gentlemen. Then came a certain Avalos, and one Saavedra, both relatives of Cortes. Next follow Barrios, who was married to his sister-in-law Doña Xuarez; a certain Alonso Lucas, Juan and Luis de la Torre, Alonso Valiente, and the squinting Ribera. But these are only a few instances; for a person had only to come from Medellin,[41] or to stand in favour with some great personage, and flatter Cortes a little, and he was presented with some of the best lands in New Spain. I am not going to reproach Cortes for having remembered all these people, for there was plenty to do all this with, but certainly he should have given the preference to his soldiers, as he had been recommended to do by his majesty; to those men through whose assistance he was elevated to that high station. Whenever any campaign was in contemplation, or any battles to be fought, he never for an instant forgot where every individual man of us was to be found, and his commands to march to the field of battle never failed to reach us. But I will put an end to my complaints of the neglect which we suffered, for now it cannot be remedied.

Though I must not forget to mention how conscious Cortes was of the injustice which he had done us, and that he even acknowledged it. After the death of Luis Ponce de Leon and of Marcus de Aguilar soon after, whom the former, as will be seen in the proper place, appointed his successor in the government, myself, with several officers

and cavaliers of the veteran Conquistadores called upon Cortes, and begged of him, conformably to his majesty's commands, to give us some of the numerous Indians which fell to his share on that occasion. To this he replied, that we fared no worse than he himself did. "But," added he, "if his majesty should again be pleased to appoint me governor of New Spain, upon my conscience, I will repair the neglect you have suffered at my hands, and will bestow the best commendaries on those for whom his majesty intended them. You may depend upon it I will make good the great errors I have committed."

With these fine words and flattering promises he thought to satisfy the old and tried Conquistadores.

A little before Cortes received the appointment of governor, the new officers of the crown arrived in Mexico: these were Alonso de Estrada, of Ciudad Real, as royal treasurer; as factor, Gonzalo de Salazar; as accountant, Rodrigo de Albornoz, of Paladinos, (Julian de Alderete having died a short time previously); as veedor, Pedro Alminde's Chirinos, a native of Ubeda, or of Baeza, besides many others.

About this time Rodrigo Rangel, although he was neither present at the siege of Mexico nor in many of the great battles we fought in New Spain, all of a sudden got it into his head that he must also reap some glory to himself; he therefore begged of Cortes to give him a small body of troops in order to put down the rebellion which had arisen among the Zapotec townships, and also that Pedro de Ircio might be allowed to join the expedition in order to support him with his good counsel. Cortes very well knew what kind of man Rangel was; that he was not fit for any kind of service, as he constantly suffered from ill health. He was gouty, had large swellings in his groins, was covered all over with sores, and so debilitated in strength that he could scarcely move along on his thin ulcerated legs. Cortes consequently refused this man his unreasonable request, representing to him what a ferocious people the Zapotecs were, and how excessively difficult it was to subdue a people like this who inhabited rugged mountains covered with eternal mists; that no cavalry could penetrate into their country, or, at most, they were wholly useless there; how, owing to the narrow and steep mountain paths, his men would only be able to march one abreast, and then with great risk of their lives, from the slippery state of the ground, which was covered with perpetual dew. For an expedition of this nature, continued Cortes, the most experienced and robust of soldiers were required, who thoroughly understood the art of war. Rangel, however, was a very conceited fellow, and also a native of Medellin, and solicited so strongly that Cortes at length granted him his request;

but, from what we afterwards heard, it would appear that Cortes only gave way to him to rid himself for ever of this man, who was of a malicious disposition, thinking he would never survive this campaign. However, this is very little to the purpose, and I will rather acquaint the reader that letters arrived from Cortes to twelve of us soldiers who had settled in Guacasualco, with orders for us to accompany Rangel on this expedition. I was likewise among the number, and it happened that all twelve of us were neighbours.

I have already informed the reader, in a previous chapter, that the country of the Zapotecs consists of high mountains; how nimble and courageous the inhabitants are, and how they communicate with each other by means of piping, the shrill sound of which reechoes through all the valleys. In such a place it may readily be imagined that a man like Rangel, and the troops under such a leader, would not be able to achieve anything. Wherever we came, the inhabitants had fled away; besides which, the houses were not built together as in other townships of New Spain, but straggling about, some on the mountains, others in the valleys. The rainy season had just set in when we arrived in this wild country, and poor Rangel suffered so violently from the swellings in his groins, that he cried out aloud in the agonies of pain. The rest of us, therefore, were not a little annoyed that we were compelled to sacrifice our time for such a man; however, he was soon convinced himself that all his trouble was to no purpose, and he resolved to relinquish the expedition, and to allow the men to return to their respective abodes. Pedro de Ircio, whom Rangel had purposely taken with him to profit by his good counsel, was the first who advised this latter step, and left him to return to Vera Cruz, where he had settled. Rangel himself marched back with us to Guacasualco, the warm climate of which he affirmed would agree best with his health. This we looked upon as a greater calamity even than marching out with him into the field of battle; however, we were obliged to submit, and we put the best face we could on the matter. When we had arrived in Guacasualco, he got it into his head to march to Cimatan and Talatupan, in order to put down the insurrection which still continued in these provinces. The inhabitants there principally confided in the strength of their positions, which lay between rivers, swamps, and marshy ground, where every step was attended with danger; besides which, they were remarkably expert archers, and the arrow which flew from their enormous bows seldom missed its aim.

In order that we might not dispute his word, Rangel produced his instructions from Cortes, in which he was also commanded to march

against the rebellious provinces of Cimatan and Talatupan; he, therefore, in his capacity of commander-in-chief, summoned all the inhabitants of Guacasualco to join him in the expedition, and we stood in such awe of Cortes' mandates that we durst not offer the slightest opposition to Rangel's authority; and above one hundred of us, with all our horses, about twenty-six musketeers and crossbow-men, marched out with him. We passed through Tonala Ayagualulco, Copilco, Zacualco, crossed several rivers in canoes; and then marched through Teutitan and the townships of Chontalpa, until within twenty miles of Cimatan. Thus far the whole country was in profound peace; but a little further on we found the whole armed force of the country drawn up against us, strongly posted between the swamps and dangerous passes, having fortified their position by ramparts and a palisade, from which they flew their arrows at us through loop-holes. When we had arrived near enough, the enemy showered their arrows so quickly upon us, that six of our horses were killed and eight men wounded. Rangel himself, who was seated on horseback, received a slight wound in the arm. We, the veteran Conquistadores, had often told him what bold, crafty, and expert warriors he would have to encounter here, and now he began to believe so himself; and as he was a man who talked a good deal, he said if he had followed our advice this would not have happened to him; and, for the future, he desired we would take upon ourselves the command of the troops during this campaign.

After the wounds of our men and those of our horses had been dressed, Rangel desired me to reconnoitre the enemy's position, and take with me two of our most active musketeers, and a remarkably fierce dog which he possessed; he himself, as he had been advised, would follow me at some distance behind with the cavalry and the rest of our troops. When I, with my two companions, approached near to Cimatan, we came up to other fortifications equally as strong as the former, from out of which we were greeted with a cloud of arrows and darts. The poor dog lay instantly dead at our feet, and I myself should have shared a similar fate if my jacket had not been very thickly quilted with cotton, for I was wounded in no less than seven places by the enemy's arrows, one of which struck my leg; nor did my two companions fare better. I now called out to some of our Indian troops, who were close behind us, to hasten back and call the whole of the foot to our assistance, but to desire the cavalry not to advance, as they would not be able to manœuvre here, and would only expose their horses to the enemy's unerring arrows.

With the musketeers, crossbow-men, and the remaining foot, we now

marched forward in a body to the attack, and very soon beat the enemy out of their entrenchments, who then retreated precipitately to the swamps, where it was impossible to follow them without great risk, for the ground was of so spongy a nature that the moment we set foot on it we sank down, and it was with great difficulty a person was got out again.

By this time Rangel had come up with the horse, and we quartered ourselves in a number of houses which stood together, and were quite deserted by the inhabitants; here we remained quiet for the remaining part of the day and dressed our wounds. The next morning we marched direct for Cimatan itself, and our route lay through extensive open plains, in which there were many dangerous bogs. In one of these the enemy lay in wait for us, and certainly they had calculated well in taking up their position here, for they easily foresaw, when the cavalry, in the heat of the battle, spread themselves in the open plain, they could not fail to get into the swampy ground, where they would be unable to move. We had many times cautioned Rangel about this, but he refused to listen to our advice; and, indeed, he was the first to get fixed in the bogs, where he lost his horse, and would himself undoubtedly have been killed if several of us had not hastened to his assistance, for several Indians had already laid hold of him to carry him off and sacrifice him to their idols. He thus narrowly escaped with his life, though his head, which, besides, was covered with sores, had been shockingly beat about by the enemy.

As this district was very thickly populated, and there was another township not very far off, we determined to march thither; but the inhabitants, on our approach, fled precipitately. Here we halted for a short time to dress Rangel's wounds and those of three other soldiers.

The next township we came to was likewise deserted by its inhabitants; but in this neighbourhood the enemy had thrown up a very formidable entrenchment, with a palisade of uncommon strength, supplied with loop-holes. Here we had scarcely rested a quarter of an hour when the enemy came suddenly pouring forth into the town from all sides, and fell upon us with so much intrepidity that they killed one of our men and two horses, and it was with the utmost difficulty we could succeed in driving them back again.

Our friend Rangel suffered greatly from the wounds he had received on his head; besides which he was tormented by the moschitoes and a large species of bat which bite people and suck their blood, so that he could get no rest day or night; and as it rained without intermission, he, with several of the men who had recently arrived from Spain,

grew heartily sick of this mode of warfare; these soldiers brought forcibly to his mind the bad state of his health, the little advantage we had gained by the three several battles we had fought with the enemy, and how we had lost eleven horses and two men, besides that numbers were wounded, and that it would be impossible to accomplish anything more in a country so full of swamps and morasses. All this Rangel listened to with secret delight, for to turn back was the very thing he so ardently desired himself; however, in order to save appearances, and that it might seem as if his determination of marching back to Guacasualco was upon the advice and at the request of the troops themselves, he called a council of war, for which he selected those only whom he well knew would be of the same opinion with himself. I, with twenty of the men, just at that moment returned from a short excursion to some cacao plantations in the neighbourhood to try if we could not capture a few of the natives, and we had the good luck to bring in three females and two men prisoners. When I arrived in Rangel's quarters, he took me aside; he spoke a good deal about the terrible wounds on his head, and assured me that the greater part of the troops had advised him to relinquish the expedition and return to Cortes in Mexico.

I declared myself against this step without any hesitation; and, as we had known each other for four years, even before we left Cuba, I said boldly to him, "How, Señor; you have advanced up to Cimatan, and now wish to return? What will Cortes think of this, and what will your enemies say? How they will always throw in your teeth that you were neither able to gain any advantage over the Zapotecs nor to subdue the inhabitants of this province, although you had among your troops some of the most experienced of the Conquistadores, of those who settled in Guacasualco! Here not your honour alone is at stake but ours also; wherefore I, with a number of my companions, have determined further to explore these swamps and mountains, and to force our way into Cimatan, the principal township of the province. My horse you may give to some other soldier who is expert in handling the lance, it is of no use to me in this country, for, on account of the bad state of the ground, the cavalry are always obliged to remain behind the rest of the troops."

As Rangel was a great talker, and a man who soon fell into a passion, he jumped up from his seat, immediately ordered all the troops to assemble around him, and cried out to them, "The die is cast! by heavens! (for he could scarcely say two words together without swearing.) We must march forward! I am now convinced of the policy

of so doing, since Bernal Diaz del Castillo has explained to me what our duty is. He is perfectly right in what he says."

Many of the men were certainly anything but pleased with this second determination of Rangel; on the other hand, however, several were delighted, and thus we marched forward again. I, at the head of the musketeers and crossbow-men, marched in advance with every military precaution, the cavalry following at some distance. The first town we came to was quite deserted by the inhabitants; we therefore continued our march towards Cimatan itself. Here we met with a very stout resistance from the enemy before we could drive them to flight, and take possession of the towns. Many of the Indians as they fled set fire to their own dwellings, and all the prisoners we took were about fifteen men and women, but we immediately set them at liberty again, and despatched them with a kind message to their countrymen, desiring them to send ambassadors to us, and conclude peace with us, when we would freely pardon their past hostilities. These prisoners soon returned with their relations and a great number of poor people, among whom we distributed all the booty we had made. The whole of these people then left, and promised they would persuade the enemy to send us messengers of peace, and declare themselves vassals of our emperor; but they took very good care neither to return themselves, nor to send us any message whatever. Upon this Rangel turned to me, and said: "By heavens, you have deceived me! You may now therefore go with some of your companions, and just catch me an equal number of Indians, as I have lost by thus following your advice." I did not give him an opportunity of repeating this command, but I immediately marched off at the head of fifty men, and attacked some houses which lay among the marshes. The inhabitants fled precipitately, and sought refuge among the large thorn bushes, which they term Xiguaquetlan, where it was impossible for any one to penetrate without being severely wounded by the sharp prickles; we managed, however, to capture twelve men and women among the cacao plantations, whom we presented to our captain. This put him into so good a humour again, that he liberated these prisoners, and despatched them with a very friendly message to the enemy, but all to no purpose; the Cimatecs still defied us, and we were thus obliged to return to Guacasualco without accomplishing our object.

These are the two campaigns of Rangel, in which he thought to have reaped so much glory, when he so ardently solicited Cortes to bestow the chief command on him. Two years after we made a more successful expedition against the Zapotecs, and we completely subdued

them, and other provinces in that quarter. The pious father Olmedo also did his utmost to give them some notion of the holy Christian religion: he taught them the articles of faith, preached to them, and of these Indians alone he baptized above a hundred; but he was unable to continue this holy occupation very long, as he was growing old and infirm; besides that, his enfeebled frame could not stand the ruggedness of the roads.

I must now, however, return to Mexico, and relate what magnificent presents Cortes sent to his Majesty in Spain.

CHAPTER CLXX.

How Cortes sends a present to his majesty; 80,000 pesos in gold and silver, besides a magnificent field-piece made of silver and gold, covered with various beautiful figures; also how he sends his father Martin Cortes above 5000 pesos.

Cortes had by this time collected about 80,000 pesos, and now also the field-piece was finished, which received the name of Phœnix, and was in every way a present worthy of the acceptance of so renowned a sovereign as our great emperor. This beautiful cannon was cast of silver, and bore the following inscription:

No bird like this was ever born,
As a servant I have no second,
And you have not your equal in the world.

Cortes therefore determined to forward all this treasure to his majesty in Spain, and commissioned a nobleman of Toledo, named Diego de Soto to be the bearer: whether Juan de Ribera, who squinted with one eye, and had been Cortes' private secretary, accompanied this gentleman, I cannot exactly remember; but one thing I know, that very little reliance could be placed in his honesty. I also imagined that he played falsely at cards and cheated at dice; besides which he possessed many other bad qualities. I merely mention all this because he behaved so villanously to Cortes in Spain, for he not only kept back the money which the latter confided to his care for his father Martin Cortes,[42] but he repaid kindness with ingratitude, and so far forgot all the favours which Cortes had bestowed upon him, that, instead of speaking good of our general, or even the truth, he calumniated his benefactor in every possible manner. As this Ribera was a man who

possessed considerable eloquence, and as he had been private secretary to Cortes, his aspersions were generally credited in Spain, by the bishop of Burgos in particular; and he created the more evil, as at that time Narvaez, Christobal de Tapia, and the agents of Velasquez had renewed their charges against Cortes, complaining to his majesty that he could not depend upon the honesty of the decision to which the commissioners had come, as Cortes had bribed them all with valuable presents. All this created a most unfavorable change in Cortes' affairs, and he fell so greatly into his majesty's displeasure that matters, in all likelihood, would have terminated most unfavorably for him if the duke of Bejar, who was greatly attached to Cortes, had not employed his utmost endeavours for him and become his bail until he should be summoned to take his trial in due form. The duke's reason for espousing Cortes' cause so warmly was, because the preliminaries of a marriage had been settled between the latter and a niece of the duke. This lady's name was Juana de Zunniga, daughter to the earl of Aguilar Don Carlos de Arellano, and she had also a brother who was a great favorite with the emperor. As about this time also the 80,000 pesos, with the other valuable presents arrived in Spain, accompanied by letters from Cortes, in which he expressed to his majesty his thanks for the great honours which his majesty had bestowed upon him, and for the just sentence he had pronounced in his favour; the inquiries which were going to be instituted against him were dropped, and the storm which was gathering over him blew over. But now again the proud inscription which he had placed on the silver field-piece created a great deal of ill feeling towards him, and several of the dukes, marquisses and earls, who had likewise rendered great services to our emperor, considered it amazingly presumptuous that Cortes should attempt, by this inscription, to raise his merits so far above all others. Even his greatest patrons, the admiral of Castile, the duke of Bejar, and the earl of Aguilar, greatly disapproved of this self-praise.[43] But why, I ask, should they term this presumptuous in our general? Can any one mention to me another general who has accomplished so many heroic deeds as Cortes, or who has conquered for our emperor a country of the magnitude of New Spain, or who has been the means of converting so many thousands of heathens to Christianity? Though, to be sure, the merit and glory of all this is not due to Cortes alone, but also to his brave companions in arms! We have equally merited for ourselves grants of land and honorable escutcheons, with those brave men of former times who were so honoured by their monarchs!

With respect to the beautiful field-piece, we further received infor-

mation that it was presented to his majesty by the comendador-mayor of Leon, Don Francisco de las Cobos, but that it was never removed from Seville, for it was smelted there and the value of the metal was altogether estimated at 20,000 ducats. This present, with all those which Cortes sent on former occasions to Spain, though some unfortunately never reached their place of destination, not only spread the fame of Cortes to all parts of the empire, but throughout the whole of christendom, and his name was in every person's mouth. Neither must I forget to mention, that after Martin Cortes had in vain demanded of the squinting Ribera to deliver up the money to him which had been sent by our general, he commenced an action against him; to which, however, an end was speedily put by the death of Ribera, who fell ill on a journey to the town of Cadahalso, after eating too heartily of fat bacon. His death was so sudden that he had not even time to confess his sins; may God have mercy on his poor soul! Amen!

While all this was going on in Spain, Cortes was very busily employed in rebuilding the city of Mexico, and he strove by every possible means to increase its population by holding out rewards to the inhabitants of the country to settle there. For this purpose he declared the town free from all tribute, until all the buildings should be completed, the causeways, aqueducts and bridges repaired, and the churches and the hospitals were entirely finished both inside and out.[44] The superintendence of the latter he gave to the excellent father Olmedo, who had already brought together all the Indians who were suffering from ill health, and attended to them with the most affectionate care. But about this time there likewise arrived in Vera Cruz twelve Franciscan monks from Spain, who were accompanied by the very pious father, Martin de Valencia, whom his holiness had appointed vicar-general of New Spain. He was a native of the village of Valencia de san Juan, in the district of Campo, and we shall see in the following chapter how this reverend father was received in Mexico.

CHAPTER CLXXI.

How twelve monks of the order of St. Francis, with the vicar-general and father-superior Martin de Valencia, arrive at Vera Cruz, and how they are received by Cortes.

The reader will remember my mentioning in a former chapter that we begged of his imperial majesty to send to New Spain some really

good and pious monks of the Franciscan order, that they might assist us to convert the Indians to Christianity, and preach the doctrine of our holy faith to them, in which father Olmedo had made so good a beginning. Cortes and the whole of us Conquistadores had also on the same occasion written to the general of the Franciscan order, who was afterwards the cardinal, brother Francisco de los Angeles, and begged of him to send us some very pious men of his order, that we might be enabled to fulfil our promise to the Indians, whom we had so often assured that the emperor would despatch to them religious men, who led a much more pious life than we did. This we had repeatedly told the Indians, and they always inquired of us in return if those men would possess the same good qualities as father Olmedo. To which we answered in the affirmative.

It was in compliance with this, our request, that the general of the Franciscan order sent the twelve monks, with their superior, who arrived in Vera Cruz. Among these religious men was also the father Toribio Motalma, to whom the caziques and distinguished personages of Mexico gave the name of *Motolinia,*[46] which signifies *the poor brother,* because he distributed everything he received among the Indians; so that it often happened he had nothing left to still his hunger. He was always clad in the meanest garments, went barefoot, and was continually preaching to the Indians, who became greatly attached to him, and they revered him as a holy person.

When Cortes received intelligence of the arrival of these reverend personages in Vera Cruz, he gave orders that they should be received with the profoundest respect in every town they passed through on their road to Mexico, whether Indian or Spanish. If they halted at a distance from any habitations, huts were to be constructed for them; in every township they came to the bells were to be rung, the whole of the inhabitants were to go out to meet them with crosses, wax lights, and flying colours; and in order to give the Indians some notion of humility and veneration, the Spaniards were particularly instructed to fall down on their knees before them, and to kiss their hands and their cowls.

Besides all this, Cortes sent refreshments for these monks to every stage along their route, and wrote most affectionate letters to them. When they had arrived within a short distance from Mexico, Cortes himself, accompanied by father Olmedo, and the whole of his brave officers and men, went out to meet them; as also Quauhtemoctzin, lord of Mexico, with the most distinguished Mexicans, and a great number of other caziques from the principal townships. As soon as we beheld

these pious men, Cortes and all the rest of us dismounted, and walked up to them; and the first who went down on his knees before Francisco de Valencia was our general himself; but when he was going to kiss the reverend father's hand, the latter would not allow him, and Cortes then only kissed his cowl.

The meeting between father Olmedo and the newly-arrived was of the most affectionate kind, and they embraced each other most heartily; then we officers and soldiers, with Quauhtemoctzin, and the other caziques, likewise knelt down before them, and kissed their garments.

Cortes' respectful conduct towards these monks made a deep and astonishing impression on the Mexican monarch, and the other grandees of the country; and it served as an excellent precept to all Indians, when they beheld the man whom they almost feared, and revered as a god, humble himself before these religious men, and stand in their presence with his head uncovered. In the presence of men who came without any covering to their feet, their garments of the meanest kind, their appearance altogether poverty stricken, and their countenances emaciated, besides that they came on foot, and not on horseback; all this amazed the Indians, who ever after throughout the whole country paid the greatest veneration to these men.

Our reverend guests were quartered in a house which had been purposely prepared for their reception; and father Olmedo, at the desire of Cortes, acted as their host.

About four years afterwards twelve other monks of the Dominican order arrived in New Spain, with their provincial or prior, father Thomas Ortiz, a native of Biscay, and who had been prior in a cloister near Punta del Drago, but unfortunately he and his companions were unable to bear the hot climate; for they all fell ill, and most of them died; however, I will relate these circumstances more fully in the proper place. Subsequently several other very pious and excellent men of this same order arrived from Spain, who were particularly assiduous in their endeavours to convert the Indians of Guatimala to Christianity.

With all this, Cortes' mind was never at ease, and he constantly apprehended that the bishop of Burgos and the agents of Diego Velasquez would renew their complaints against him to his majesty, or injure him in some way or other; and as his father, with Diego de Ordas, sent him the most favorable account of their progress in settling the preliminaries of marriage between himself and Doña Juana de Zunniga, he considered it would be great policy on his part to send all the gold

he could possibly collect to Spain, partly to convince the duke of Bejar of the riches he possessed, and of the magnitude of his conquests, but particularly to ingratiate himself further with his majesty to obtain additional honours and favours from him.

CHAPTER CLXXII.

How Cortes sends his majesty 30,000 *pesos worth of gold, with an account of the conversion of the Indians, the rebuilding of the city of Mexico, and of the expedition of Christobal de Oli to the Honduras; also how the vessel which conveyed this gold at the same time carried secret letters to Spain, written by the royal accountant Rodrigo de Albornoz, in which Cortes and the whole of the veteran Conquistadores were calumniated in the vilest manner.*

After Cortes had been appointed governor of New Spain, he considered himself called upon to give his majesty a circumstantial account of what was going on in the country; of the conversion of the Indians, the rebuilding of the city of Tenochtitlan-Mexico, and of other important circumstances; among which he mentioned, in the first place, the expedition he had sent to Honduras, and he was very particular in bringing under his majesty's notice the great expenses to which it had put him. He then went on to state that he had conferred the chief command of this armament on Christobal de Oli, who had allowed himself to be bribed by Diego Velasquez to make common cause with him, and renounce all further obedience to Cortes.

Our general then told his majesty that he was determined, if his majesty should think proper, to despatch another officer to the Honduras, to deprive Oli of the command, and cast him into chains; but if he resisted, he would himself march against him. A severe punishment, continued Cortes, ought to be inflicted in this instance, in order to deter other officers who were sent out to subdue other provinces from following Oli's example. He must therefore earnestly supplicate his majesty's permission to march against this officer.

In these despatches Cortes preferred other much heavier charges against Diego Velasquez, not only with regard to having bribed Oli to revolt, but on account of the many conspiracies which he had caused to be formed against his life during the expeditions to the rebellious provinces, and, upon the whole, for having attempted to disturb the peace of the country, which had obliged him to punish the more guilty

ones with the utmost rigour of the law. He then went on to say that he would have been able to forward his majesty a much larger sum on this occasion than 30,000 pesos, if the revolutionary spirit which his enemies strove to increase on all sides had not thrown obstacles in his way, and thereby impeded his operations. Our general concluded by assuring his majesty he would take every opportunity of sending as much gold as he possibly could to Spain.

Cortes at the same time wrote to Diego de Ordas, to his father, and to his relative, the licentiate Francisco Nuñez, who was reporter to the royal council, giving them a full account of the conduct of Rodrigo de Albornoz; how this man secretly calumniated him in Mexico, because he had omitted to give him as great a number of Indians as he had required, and had refused to give him the daughter of the king of Tezcuco in marriage, for whom he had contracted a better match with a gentleman of quality; besides which he had been informed that this Albornoz had been secretary to the bishop of Burgos in Flanders, and that he was a perfect creature of this prelate. He constantly kept up a secret correspondence with some one or other, even by means of figures, and Cortes thought it most likely that he had on this occasion secretly written to his patron the bishop, and slandered him in every possible manner; he therefore cautioned his friends to be upon their guard, and narrowly to watch his interests, for Cortes thought the bishop was at that time still president of the council of the Indies.

In consequence of these apprehensions, Cortes sent duplicate copies of all his despatches, so that if one set were seized at Seville by the bishop's functionaries, the other might arrive safe in the proper hands.

The accountant Albornoz had indeed, as it proved, forwarded letters by this same vessel to his majesty, to the bishop of Burgos, and to the royal council of the Indies, in which he renewed all the late accusations against our general, adding besides several new ones: among others, he assured his majesty that Cortes levied vast quantities of gold upon the caziques, under the pretext of forwarding it to his majesty; thereby occasioning great discontent throughout the whole country. He had assembled a considerable number of the distinguished females of the country, in order to marry them to his Spanish soldiers; but if honorable men requested any one of them in marriage, he was sure to refuse them, and retained them rather as his own mistresses. The caziques of the country in general looked upon him as a king; in fact, they knew of no other king than Cortes, who took to himself an equal fifth of the whole revenue of the country with the emperor, and he had amassed immense treasures to himself. Yet he was so artful, that it

was impossible to divine his plans. He was building large fortresses, and it might be his intention to declare his independence of the Spanish crown, and turn traitor to his own country. It was, at all events, high time for his majesty to adopt some decisive step to prevent this, and despatch some personage of distinction to New Spain, in order to deprive Cortes of the chief command, and of all sovereign power in the country.

Besides this, Albornoz slandered Cortes in various other ways, and the bishop of Burgos determined to profit by it; and as Narvaez, Tapia, and the agents of Diego Velasquez still continued their solicitations at court, the bishop strenuously urged them to renew their accusations against Cortes, and he strove to add further weight to their complaints by the accounts which had just been received from Albornoz.

After his majesty had read these severe charges against our general, he considered they were all true, and he said to Narvaez, who was spokesman for the rest: "I am now determined that Cortes shall be punished! Though he may send me a quantity of gold, yet the accusations that are brought against him are becoming too frequent, and I love justice before all the treasures he can procure me."

His majesty did not long delay to carry out his threats, for he despatched orders to the admiral of St. Domingo to repair at the head of 600 men to Mexico, to seize Cortes' person, and if he found him guilty to cut off his head without any further ceremony, and to punish all those who assisted in the defeat of Narvaez. The emperor, in order to spur the admiral on to fulfil his commands, even promised to appoint him admiral of New Spain.

The admiral duly received these commands, but either from want of money to fit out an armament sufficiently extensive for this purpose, or whether he considered it a hazardous enterprise, he continually delayed to act up to the emperor's commands. Certain it is, however, that his friends cautioned him against Cortes' good fortune in arms, who, with a handful of men, had defeated the large body of troops under Narvaez, and they likewise assured him that he would not find Cortes or his companions in arms guilty of anything wrong, but in every sense loyal and faithful servants of his majesty. To all this was added, that it had been observed to the emperor what a very distinguished appointment admiral of New Spain would be, and that it was too great a reward to bestow on any one for a mere expedition of this nature.

In the meantime while the admiral of St. Domingo was making preparations for fitting out this armament, Cortes' agents, his father

Martin Cortes and father Melgarejo de Urrea, got information of all that was going forward, and they no longer doubted from the letters they received from Cortes himself, that the accountant Albornoz, or others of his enemies, had been secretly plotting against him at court. These gentlemen, therefore, called upon the duke of Bejar, to whom they gave a full account of all the circumstances, and then laid before him Cortes' own letters. When the duke saw how perilous the posture of affairs looked, and how necessary it was to lend immediate assistance, he repaired to his majesty without delay, accompanied by several of his distinguished relatives, Martin Cortes, and father Melgarejo. After paying to his majesty the deep respect which was due from them to their sovereign and master, the duke humbly begged his majesty not to put any faith in what the accountant Albornoz might say, who was the avowed enemy of Cortes, and that his majesty would be pleased to countermand the orders he had given to the admiral of St. Domingo, at least if less suspicious witnesses than the accountant Albornoz did not come forward against Cortes. As his majesty, continued the duke, was a monarch who loved justice above all things, it was necessary to be doubly precautious in taking proceedings against Cortes and his companions in arms, who had rendered those services to their monarch, of which history could not produce another example. He himself still continued to place implicit confidence in the loyalty of Cortes towards his majesty, and in the same way as he had previously offered to answer for Cortes with his head, he was now quite ready to do the same again, and to stake the whole of his possessions in the bargain. After the duke had thus declared himself to the emperor, he gave his majesty an account of the letters which Cortes had written to his own father, in which he had explained the reasons of Albornoz's hatred to him. He then reminded his majesty of the vast quantities of gold which Cortes had forwarded to Spain, and of the many and great services he had altogether rendered to the crown, and brought forth excellent arguments in justification of Cortes' conduct. His majesty was so far convinced of the sound reasoning of the duke, that he determined to despatch to New Spain a man of high rank, distinguished talents, and of an unblemished character, there thoroughly to investigate the matter on the spot itself.

The imperial court was at that time in Toledo, of which town a cavalier and licentiate, named Luis Ponce de Leon, a cousin to the corregidor, earl Don Martin de Cordoba, was then the vice-regidor. It was on this gentleman that his majesty's choice fell, and Ponce de Leon accordingly received the important commission to repair, without

delay, to New Spain, there to make the strictest inquiries into the accusations which had been made against Cortes, and if he found him guilty to punish him according to the utmost rigour of the law.

The licentiate Luis Ponce de Leon promised his majesty to employ his utmost endeavours to bring the truth of the matter to light, and made preparations for his journey to the New World; but he did not leave Spain till two and a half years after, so that I shall subsequently again have to recur to these circumstances. Nor did we receive any information from Cortes' father of what had taken place in Spain until after this time had elapsed. For the rest, Albornoz continued regularly to despatch his slanders to the emperor, and even did not spare the viceroy himself, Don Antonio de Mendoza, a man of exalted mind, worthy of the most grateful remembrance, and whose name will be ever glorious. However spotless the government of this gentleman might be, however honest in his distribution of justice, yet this Albornoz presumed to slander him to the emperor, and this merely because they were not upon good terms with each other. Subsequently all the charges which Albornoz had made against Cortes became known to this excellent viceroy, but he contented himself by merely ordering Albornoz into his presence, and laying before him the slanderous letters which he had written; he said to him with his usual mildness and composure of countenance: "Since you are so accustomed to write to his majesty, do not write falsehood, and thereby wantonly precipitate others into ruin!" Albornoz, as may easily be imagined, stood quite confounded and abashed.

I must now relate how Cortes, ignorant at that time of the secret machinations of his enemies at the imperial court, sent out an armament against Christobal de Oli.

CHAPTER CLXXIII.

How Cortes sent out a captain, named Francisco de Las Casas against Christobal de Oli, on receiving intelligence that this officer had made common cause with Diego Velasquez, and had renounced all further obedience to him.

In order to render this chapter quite intelligible to the reader I must recur to prior events. I mentioned above that Cortes fitted out an armament for the Honduras and Higueras, the command of which he intrusted to Christobal de Oli. It was not long before our general

received intelligence of the unfortunate termination of this expedition, as far as regarded himself. When, therefore, he learnt that Oli had made common cause with Diego Velasquez, and had determined to act independent of him, he became very pensive. But, as he was remarkably spirited, and not accustomed to joke in matters of this kind, he at once determined either to march against Oli in person, or to send out an officer against him on whom he could place implicit reliance, as he had previously declared to his majesty.

About this time there had arrived in Mexico a cavalier, named Francisco de Las Casas. As he was a man in whom he could confide, being also related to him, he resolved to send him against Oli. For this purpose he fitted out a small armament, consisting of five vessels, well provided with cannon and other ammunition. On board of this fleet he embarked one hundred men, among whom were several of the veteran Conquistadores, as for instance, Pedro Moreno Medrano, Juan Nuñez de Mercado, Juan Vello, and many others, whose names I will not mention, as they died on their way thither.

Francisco de Las Casas received full powers from Cortes to seize Oli and throw him into chains. He set sail from Vera Cruz with very favorable weather, and arrived in a short time in the bay of Triunfo de la Cruz, where Oli had founded a town of the same name, and in front of which his vessels lay at anchor. As Francisco de Las Casas on entering the bay had hoisted a white flag, Oli scarcely knew what to think at first, but thought at all events it was better to be upon his guard, and ran out two of his smallest vessels, well armed with a strong body of men, in order to prevent Las Casas from entering into the harbour and landing his troops, though he was as yet quite ignorant who the new comers were. Las Casas, who was a man of great courage and determination, immediately lowered his boats, on board of which he placed one of the falconets and the most active of his men, well armed with muskets and crossbows, being resolved, he said, to land his troops some how or other. A severe conflict now ensued, in which Las Casas bored one of Oli's vessels into the ground, killed four of his men and wounded several others.

Christobal de Oli, seeing that matters were growing very serious, thought it advisable on his part to stay hostilities, in order to gain time to assemble all his troops about him; for he had, a few days previously, despatched two companies to the river Pechin against a certain Gil Gonsalez de Avila, who had begun to subdue the country there. He therefore sent word to Las Casas that he was desirous of making terms of peace with him; to which Las Casas so far consented that he staid

hostilities for the present, and lay out at sea with his vessel for the night, in order to effect a landing in some other bay. How much more fortunate it would have been for him if he had acted according to the letter which was secretly thrust into his hand during the engagement! In this letter namely, several of Oli's men who favoured Cortes advised Las Casas by all means to land his troops without delay; that they would all run over to his side and deliver up Oli a prisoner to him. Fortunately for Oli, and unfortunately for Las Casas, a furious north wind, which is the most dangerous of all on this coast, arose during the night, and the whole of his vessels were wrecked; thirty of his men were drowned, and all the ammunition and stores went to the bottom. Las Casas and the rest of his men, after wandering about the country for two days benumbed with wet and cold, without a morsel of food to eat, were all taken prisoners by Oli's troops.

Christobal de Oli, it may be imagined, was excessively rejoiced that things had thus terminated so unexpectedly in his favour, and he exulted greatly in having the person of Las Casas in his power. He immediately took the latter's troops into his service, and compelled them to take a solemn oath never to desert him, but to oppose Cortes if he should come with an army against him; not until they had promised all this did he set them at liberty. Las Casas alone he kept a prisoner.

Shortly upon this the detachment also returned which had been sent against Gil Gonsalez de Avila. This man had arrived in the country with the appointment of governor of Golfo Dulce, and he had already founded, at about four miles distance from the bay of the same name, a town which he called San Gil de Buena Vista. The country bounding on the river Chipin was at that time inhabited by a very warlike people; and as by far the greater part of Gil Gonsalez's troops were suffering from ill health, the latter had only been able to throw a feeble garrison into the town of Buena Vista. Christobal de Oli had been duly apprized of this, and ordered the town to be attacked; but his troops could not so easily get possession of the place as they expected. Avila's small body of men defended themselves most vigorously, and eight of the soldiers, with a cousin of his, were killed. Christobal de Oli was both rejoiced and proud to have taken prisoners the chief commanders of two separate armaments; and as he bore the character of being an excellent soldier, which, indeed, no one could deny, and it was of importance to him that the success of his arms should be made known through the islands, he immediately sent information of his good fortune to the governor of Cuba.

After this victory he marched his troops towards the interior of the

country to a large township named Naco, which lay in a very populous district. It was upon this occasion that Naco was completely destroyed, and the whole of the surrounding country laid waste, and this I relate from eye-witness, as I subsequently visited these parts myself, when I accompanied Cortes on his expedition to the Honduras, of which a full account will be given in the proper place.

From Naco, Oli sent out a strong detachment to forage the country, under the command of Briones, who had been one of the first to advise Oli to declare his independence of Cortes. This Briones was of a turbulent disposition, besides being very passionate, and had only the upper half of his ears left, having had the bottom halves, as he asserted, cut off by the enemy, while he, with several other officers, was obstinately defending some fortification. He terminated his life in a miserable manner, for he was subsequently hung at Guatimala for creating a sedition among the troops. Some time after Briones had been sent out by Oli to a distant part of the country with a considerable body of his troops, he received intelligence that he had deserted, with the whole of the men under his command, and was marching in the direction of New Spain; this news was indeed found to be perfectly correct.

This circumstance, Las Casas and Avila thought, presented to them a most favorable opportunity to rid themselves of Oli, who still continued to treat both of them as prisoners of war, though they were allowed to go at large, for Oli depended too much upon his own personal courage to fear anything from them. The whole of the adherents of Cortes secretly joined Las Casas and Avila, and they agreed upon a certain signal to fall upon Oli and stab him to death under the cry of "In the name of the emperor and of Cortes, down with the tyrant!" Everything had been arranged in the best possible manner for this purpose, and Las Casas, on one occasion said to Oli: "Señor captain, do grant me my liberty and allow me to return to New Spain, in order that I may render an account to Cortes of the unfortunate termination of this expedition? I promise you to become mediator between yourself and Cortes, and to procure for you the government, with the chief military command of this country, and I will myself see the appointment drawn up in due form. What can you gain by detaining me a prisoner, for I am only a hindrance to you in all your undertakings?" To this Oli replied, "That he was perfectly contented with things as they were, and that he was delighted to have a man of his worth about him."

"But have at least then," continued Las Casas, "some thought for your own personal safety, for I might get it into my head some day or other to put you to death!"

As Las Casas said all this in a joking humour, he took no notice of it, and continued as little on his guard as ever.

One evening Las Casas, Avila, Juan Nuñez de Mercado, and other soldiers of Cortes' party were invited to sup with Oli. The first two, as prisoners of war, were not allowed to carry arms, but had concealed on their persons large knives, which were ground very sharp. The whole of the company had already laid aside their cloaks to seat themselves at table, and stood around Oli, discoursing on Cortes' good fortune and the conquest of the strong city of Mexico. As Christobal de Oli was thus quite off his guard, not in the least suspecting that there was any design upon his life, Las Casas, on a sudden, seized forcibly hold of his beard and stabbed him in the neck with his knife. Upon this the other conspirators fell in a body upon him, and gave him so many stabs, that he fell to the ground; but as he was a man of enormous muscular power he regained his consciousness, while the conspirators were sitting at table enjoying their suppers, and assembling all his strength he started up from the floor with the cry of: "*My friends, assist your captain!*" and then ran out to hide himself in the woods until his adherents should have rallied round him. And, indeed, a great part of his troops instantly assembled for this purpose; but Las Casas cried out to them: "In the name of the emperor and of Cortes I command you to fall upon the tyrant! His tyranny is no longer to be borne!"

As soon as these names were mentioned no one durst stir a finger in Oli's defence; on the contrary, every one quietly submitted and immediately obeyed Las Casas' commands, by hurrying off in search of Oli to bring him in a prisoner. He then made known that any one who knew of Oli's concealment and neglected to give information of it should suffer death.

By this means it was soon discovered where Oli lay concealed, and after he had been brought in a prisoner, a criminal suit was commenced against him in due form, and sentence of death being passed on him he was decapitated by order of these two officers, Las Casas and Avila on the market-place at Naco.

Thus miserably did Christobal de Oli end his days by listening to the advice of bad men, and forgetting how greatly he was indebted to Cortes, who had appointed him quarter-master-general, and had bestowed upon him lucrative commendaries. He had always proved himself a man of great courage, and was recently married to a Portuguese lady, named Filipa de Araujo, by whom he had a daughter.

As soon as Las Casas and Avila had got rid of their common enemy they assembled all the troops; they divided the command equally

between themselves, and continued on the best terms with each other. Las Casas soon after founded the town of Truxillo, which he so called from his native place of Truxillo in Estremadura; and Avila despatched a small body of troops to the town which he had previously founded, called Buena Vista, in order to see what condition the colony was in. The command of this small detachment he gave to an officer named Armenta, with orders not to make any changes there, if at least he found everything in the same condition as when he left it; but to await his return from New Spain, whither he would immediately repair to beg Cortes for a fresh supply of troops. Las Casas likewise determined to proceed with Avila to Mexico, in order that they might jointly give Cortes an account of every circumstance that had transpired.

I must, however, close this chapter here, for I shall have to return to these occurrences in the proper part of my history; I have merely to observe, that Cortes did not receive intelligence of what I have just related till some considerable time after.

CHAPTER CLXXIV.

How Cortes himself marches at the head of his troops to the Honduras in search of Christobal de Oli; of the officers and men he selected on this occasion, and of other matters.

SEVERAL months having now elapsed since the departure of Las Casas with the armament, and Cortes still without any tidings from him, he began to fear that some misfortune had befallen him. The more he thought of the many dangers to which vessels are exposed, and the various changes of good and bad fortune which are inseparable from an expedition of this nature, the more he regretted, notwithstanding all the confidence he placed in Las Casas, that he had not gone in person at the head of the armament. All this, added to the assurances he had received of there being lucrative gold mines along the coast of the Honduras, determined Cortes to march thither in person at the head of his troops.

His first care was to have the fortifications of Mexico well mounted with cannon, and a good supply of ammunition to be laid by in the arsenals for the protection of the city. The government of New Spain he intrusted in his absence to the treasurer Alonso de Estrada and to the accountant Albornoz. How he could make choice of the latter is

quite beyond my speculation; but he certainly would not have done so if he had been aware of the infamous manner in which Albornoz had slandered him to the emperor.

The licentiate Zuazo, who has so often been mentioned in the course of this history, he appointed alcalde-mayor of Mexico, and the entire management of his own private property he gave to his relative Rodrigo de Paz.

After he had thus made every provision for the government and security of Mexico, he particularly desired the crown officers, to whom he had intrusted the chief government, the Franciscan friar Toribio Motolinia, and the excellent father Olmedo, who was held in the highest estimation in Mexico, and had deservedly the greatest influence on all classes of people, to act in harmony to assist each other in the conversion of the Indians and to maintain peace and good order throughout the provinces, as well as in the city itself. In order, however, to deprive the discontented of the Indian population in the city and in the provinces of all possibility of choosing any leader of distinction, should they take it into their heads to rise up in arms during his absence, he took along with him Quauhtemoctzin, besides the king of Tlacupa, and several others of the most distinguished caziques of the country, among whom the chief of Tapiezuela held the first rank, and even despatched a message to the caziques of Mechoacan, desiring them also to join his army.

As Geronimo de Aguilar had died some time previously, he only took Doña Marina with him as interpretess. The suite of principal officers and cavaliers who accompanied him in this expedition was very brilliant; of which I shall only mention Sandoval, Luis Marin, Francisco Marmolejo, Gonzalo Rodriguez de Ocampo, Pedro de Ircio, the brothers Avalas and Saavedra, Palacios Rubios, Pedro de Saucedo, Geronimo Ruis de la Mota, Alonso de Grado, Sante Cruz Burgales, Pedro de Solis, Juan Xaramillo, Alonso Valiente, Navarrete, and Serna; further, Diego de Mazariegos, cousin to the treasurer Gil Gonsalez de Benavides, Herman Lopez de Avila, Gaspar Garnica, and several others, whose names I have forgotten. The priests who joined this army were, father Juan de las Varillas, of Salamanca, and two Flemish monks, who were profound theologians, and preached a good deal. Besides these, there was another priest, whose name has slipped my memory. Of the officers of his household, Cortes selected his major-domo Carranza, his chief waiters Juan de Jasso and Rodrigo Mañeco, his butler Cervan Bejarano, and two stewards of the kitchen department, San Miguel and Guinea.

As Cortes took with him a great quantity of gold and silver utensils

and ornaments, he gave the immediate charge of these to a certain Tello, of Medina, and another person, named Salazar, of Madrid. As physician he took the licentiate Pedro de Lopez, of Mexico, and as surgeon Diego de Pedraza. To all these was added a number of pages, of whom Don Francisco de Montejo was one, who subsequently commanded in Yucatan, and was son to the oft-mentioned Montejo, adelantado of the latter province; further, there were two pages appointed as his lance-bearers; his chief equerry Gonzalo Rodriguez de Ocampo, with a number of grooms, and three Spanish mule-drivers; two falconers, Garci Caro and Alvaro Montanes; a number of performers on the sackbut, clarion, and dulcimer; lastly, a buffoon and a juggler, who likewise entertained the men with puppet-shows; further, he took with him a large herd of swine, in order that the troops might have a constant supply of fresh meat on their march. Besides the numbers of Indians which accompanied the several caziques, a body of 3000 Mexican warriors were also joined to this army.

Just as Cortes was about to commence his march from Mexico, the factor Salazar and the veedor Chirinos, who were both hurt and disappointed that Cortes had not thought proper to give them any particular appointment during the time he would be absent, urged on the licentiate Zuazo and Rodrigo de Paz, besides all the veteran Conquistadores and Cortes' intimate friends who remained behind in the metropolis, earnestly to dissuade him from leaving Mexico, and not to intrust the government of the country to other hands, as there was not the least doubt but that the whole of New Spain would revolt in his absence. These representations occasioned much debate between both parties; but as Cortes abided by the resolution he had taken, the factor and veedor begged of him to allow them, at least, to accompany him to Guacasualco, through which his march lay, and so far to accept of their services.

Cortes thus left Mexico[45] at the head of his army, and took the road leading to the last-mentioned province. The splendour with which he was received in every township he came to, and the festivities which took place in his honour, were really astonishing. On his march he was also joined by fifty men who had but recently arrived from Spain, all light-hearted extravagant young fellows.

In order that his troops might not be detained on the road for want of provisions, and to procure these the more readily, he divided his army into two bodies, which marched by different routes to Guacasualco. Immediately about his person were Sandoval, the factor and the veedor, who vied with each other in their attentions to him; but none of them

carried their politeness so far as the factor, who, whenever he addressed Cortes, bowed himself almost double, with his head uncovered, and took every opportunity, under the most flattering assurances of his devoted attachment, to dissuade him from this tedious and perilous expedition, and summoned to his aid all the subtlety of rhetoric in representing to him the evils that might ensue from it, and the little advantage he could gain. He would often sing out, when riding along at the side of Cortes:

Turn back, dear uncle, turn back;
Dear uncle, turn back!

To this Cortes likewise replied, in a singing tone of voice:

Forward, nephew; forward, nephew;
Let not omens dishearten you;
The will of God it must be done;
Forward, nephew; forward, nephew!

When the division which was commanded by Cortes himself arrived in the neighbourhood of Orizaba, the property of the squinting Ojedo, Doña Marina was married to Juan Xaramillo, and the hymeneal knot was solemnly tied in presence of witnesses.

The army now marched further on towards the extensive township of Guazaltepec, which was comprised in the commendary of Sandoval. From this place we received intelligence in Guacasualco of Cortes' approach, and the whole of us officers and distinguished personages of the town, with the alcaldes, regidors, and all the chief authorities, immediately marched out, and we advanced about 132 miles into the country to receive our general. This was done with such zeal on our part as if we were each going to receive some large benefice; and I merely mention this circumstance to show the reader how much Cortes was esteemed and feared at the same time. He was always pleased to find this kind of respect paid to his person, and it was impossible to go too far in your attentions to him.

The army now continued its march from Guazaltepec further on towards Guacasualco, and had to pass over a very broad and rapid river, when the first ill omen showed itself; for three of the canoes, which were conveying across considerable sums of money and other things, upset, and all they contained went to the bottom. Upon this occasion Juan Xaramillo lost the half of his baggage, nor was it possible to save any part that floated down the river, on account of the enormous alligators with which the water abounded.

From this place Cortes marched over the townships of Uluta up to

the broad river of Guacasualco, where every preparation had been made to convey the army across, for which purpose a great number of canoes lay ready fastened two and two together. In the town of Guacasualco itself triumphal arches had been erected, and every preparation had been made to entertain our general as magnificently as possible. Sham fights took place between Christians and Moors, all kinds of fireworks were displayed at night, and various other rejoicings were kept up.

Cortes staid altogether six days in Guacasualco, during which time the veedor and factor left him not a moment's peace, with their representations to relinquish the expedition, and return to Mexico. They constantly reminded him of the men to whom he had confided the chief government, and told him that the accountant Albornoz was a man fond of innovation, restless of disposition, and double-faced; that the treasurer openly prided himself on being a son of his catholic majesty; so that very little trust could be placed in either of these gentlemen. From the moment he had intrusted the government to them, and even previously, they had laid their heads together, and determined upon some secret movement. They likewise reminded Cortes of the letters he had received on his march hither, from Mexico, in which it was stated that his two representatives had already began to slander his government of the country. In short, the veedor and factor spoke in such eloquent and flattering terms of their great attachment to his person, and how much more fitting persons they were themselves to have been intrusted with the government in his absence than the two other gentlemen, that at last they actually persuaded him to grant them equal power in the administration; and not only this, but with the additional authority to take the sole government into their own hands, if they saw that Albornoz and Estrada acted against the true interests of his majesty.

The power which Cortes thus conferred upon the veedor and factor was the source of many evils, and of the terrible insurrection which shortly after burst out in Mexico, and of which I will give a full account in a following chapter, when our army has fairly reached the town of Truxillo, after a long and tedious march. I will only take this opportunity of observing, that father Olmedo, and the Franciscan monks who accompanied us, did not hesitate a moment to tell Cortes how greatly they disapproved of this measure, and said, they hoped to God he would not have to repent of this step: and indeed their apprehensions were but too well confirmed by future events! Cortes, however, took little heed of what the good Franciscans had said; for only the words of father Olmedo, whom he consulted on most occasions, had ever any weight with him.

When the factor and the veedor took leave of Cortes before returning to Mexico, it was ludicrous to behold their reverential bows, and to hear the compliments they paid him. The factor, in particular, had a manner of sighing peculiar to himself, and he appeared ready to burst into tears when he took leave of Cortes, and the deed of appointment, which had been drawn out by his intimate friend, the secretary Alonso Valiente, was put into his hands. Both these gentlemen now set out for Mexico, whither they were accompanied by Hernan Lopez de Avila, as he was suffering from severe pains in his joints and large swellings in his groins, so that he could scarcely move along.

We will now wish them a pleasant journey, and begin to think of our tedious march, during which we suffered so many hardships, that it was a wonder any of us ever returned alive.

CHAPTER CLXXV.

How we commence our march from Guacasualco, and the terrible fatigues and hardship we had to undergo for the space of two years and three months.

The first thing Cortes did, after despatching the veedor and factor to Mexico, was to write to his major-domo Simon de Cuenca, at Vera Cruz, ordering him to load two small vessels with maise biscuits, six pipes of wine, oil, vinegar, smoked hog's flesh, and other provisions, besides a good quantity of horse-shoes. Cuenca was himself to take charge of these vessels, and to sail in along the coast until he should receive further instructions as to the place he was to put into.

The next thing he did was to issue orders to all the Spanish settlers at Guacasualco, with the exception of those who were ill, to join him in this expedition. The reader will remember, from what I stated in a former chapter, that the first Spanish colonists of Guacasualco were all of the oldest Conquistadores of New Spain, and most of them were of noble families. The whole of us had now hoped to enjoy some repose, and that we should have been allowed to recover from all the great fatigues and hardships we had undergone; and we were just bringing our lands into a pretty good state of cultivation, when we received orders from Cortes to accompany him in an expedition of above 2000 miles from Guacasualco, the whole of our route lying through a hostile country; on an expedition which lasted for two years and three months, and in which we lost everything we took with us! Not one of us had sufficient courage to say no; and if he had, it would have

availed him nothing, for he would have been compelled to go!. We therefore equipped ourselves in the best possible manner, caparisoned our horses, and patiently awaited our general's commands to march out.

Cortes' whole force, including those of Guacasualco, consisted of above 250 foot, besides the musketeers and crossbow-men, 130 horse, and a number of men recently arrived from Spain. Before leaving Guacasualco, Cortes gave me the chief command of a detachment, consisting of 30 Spaniards and 3000 Mexicans, with instructions to march against the Cimatans, and force them into obedience, as they still obstinately refused to submit to our arms. The 3000 Mexicans were to be distributed among the townships of the country, but I was particularly instructed to abstain from all violent measures if the inhabitants were peaceably inclined, and submitted as vassals to our emperor; neither was I to demand anything further from them than the necessary provisions for the troops. If they still persisted in their hostilities, I was thrice to summon them to submit, in a manner intelligible to them, and in presence of a notary and several witnesses; but if they refused to submit after the third summons, I was to commence hostilities against them without any further delay.

I am still in possession of the document containing these instructions, which is signed by Cortes himself, and countersigned by his secretary Alonso Valiente.

These commands I punctually obeyed, and I had the good fortune to tranquillize the whole province; but this was of very short duration, for when these Indians heard what a small number of Spaniards were left behind in Guacasualco, and that the whole of the veteran Conquistadores had marched out with Cortes, they again revolted, a few months after our departure.

As soon as I had pacified the province of Cimatan, I again joined the main body under Cortes, with which I came up near Iquinupa. Our general had marched from Guacasualco to Tonala, a distance of about thirty-two miles; he passed a river by means of canoes, and then came to the township Ayagualulco. From this place he continued his march twenty-eight miles further on, up to an arm of the sea, over which Cortes threw a bridge, which was in every respect a work of wonder, and was half a mile in length. During the whole of our march through this country, two of our officers of Guacasualco had to go a considerable way in advance of the army. One of these captains was Francisco de Medina, a man of a peaceable disposition, and who knew best how to manage the inhabitants of the country.

After we had crossed this estuary, we passed through several small

townships, until we arrived on the banks of the immense river Mazapa, which flows from Chiapa, and is termed by the sailors *Rio de dos bocas*. A large number of canoes lay ready for us here, fastened two and two together, in which we ferried safely across this broad river. We then passed through numerous small townships, and had to throw a bridge across another estuary, and also a river, before we reached the extensive township of Copilco, and here you enter the populous province of Chontalpa. This country enjoyed the profoundest peace at that time, and was everywhere covered with cacao plantations. From Copilco we passed over Nacanuxuica to Zaqutan, after passing over another river, by means of canoes. On our arrival in this township, the inhabitants appeared very friendly disposed, but during the night they had all left, and fled to the opposite shore of a broad river, between the swamps. Cortes then ordered that we should march across the mountains, in search of the inhabitants. This was indeed a most inconsiderate command, nor was there any advantage to be gained thereby.

It was only with the greatest difficulty, after undergoing excessive fatigues, that we succeeded in passing over this broad river, and all we gained by it was the capture of seven Indian chiefs, with a few of the common people; but even these soon ran away from us, so that at last we had not even a single person left to guide us on our march.

While we were staying here, the chief caziques of Tabasco came to us with fifty canoes, laden with maise and other provisions. Some of the inhabitants of the Teapan townships, then comprehended in my commendary, also arrived, with several canoes full of provisions.

Our further march now lay through Tepetitan and Iztapa. In our road we had to pass the deep river Chilapa, where we were detained four days in constructing boats to ferry over the army without danger. Further up this river I knew there was a township, which likewise bore the name of Chilapa. I therefore proposed to our general to despatch five of our Indian guides to this place, and request the inhabitants to come down with their canoes. To this Cortes readily agreed, and he ordered one of our men to accompany the Indians thither, who succeeded so well, that they returned with two caziques, besides six large canoes laden with provisions. With these and the boats we had constructed, the whole of the troops safely crossed the river; but, as I have said before, all this cost us four whole days.

We then arrived in the township of Tepetitan, which was quite deserted by its inhabitants, and every house had been burnt to the ground. The inhabitants of this place, we were told, had been at war with their neighbours, and a severe battle had recently been fought between them,

in which the former were defeated with great loss, when the enemy destroyed their town by fire, and returned home with a great number of prisoners.

For the next three days after we had passed the river Chilapa, our route lay through one continued bog, in which our horses often sank up to their girths. The next township we came to was Iztapa, where we did not meet a living soul, for the inhabitants, from fear of us, had all fled across a rapid river. We, however, went instantly in pursuit of them, and after some time we came up with the caziques, and a number of men, women, and children. Cortes, by means of Doña Marina, spoke very kindly to them, and restored to their families four women and three men, whom we had captured among the mountains. In gratitude for this, and in order to show how friendly they were disposed towards us, these Indians presented our general with several ornaments of gold, but the metal was of an inferior quality. In this neighbourhood we halted three days, as it contained plenty of good food for our horses, and a great abundance of maise. Cortes considered this would be a most eligible spot to found a colony in, as the country round about contained a number of wealthy townships, from which a settlement would derive great advantages, and have a constant supply of all necessaries. Here Cortes also made the most minute inquiries of the caziques and Indian merchants as to the route we were to take; for which purpose he laid before them a piece of nequen cloth, he had brought with him from Guacasualco, and on which were noted down all the townships we had to pass through up to Huyacala. This place was termed by these Indians Great Acala, in order to distinguish it from another, called Little Acala, and they assured us that the greater part of our route lay through a country containing numerous rivers, and was intersected in various places by arms of the sea. Up to Tamaztepec alone, they said, which lay at a distance of three days' journey, we should have to pass no less than three rivers, and one estuary, which was exceedingly broad.

In consequence of this information, Cortes requested the caziques to furnish us with canoes, and assist us in the construction of bridges. This they readily consented to do, but took care not to fulfil their promise. We, however, placed perfect confidence in what they had said, and only took provisions for three days with us. But it appears they had merely wished to get rid of us as speedily as possible; for, instead of three, it took us seven days' march before we arrived at Tamaztepec, nor did we find at any of the rivers either canoes or bridges; so that our Indian friends had deceived us in every way. We were therefore

compelled to set to work ourselves, to construct bridges sufficiently strong to carry our horses; every officer and soldier set diligently to work in felling the heavy trees, and dragging them to the river side, in all of which we were likewise greatly assisted by the Mexican warriors. Three days were spent in the construction of this bridge, during which time we had nothing to subsist on but grass, and a wild root called by the Indians quecuenque, which burnt our lips and tongues. After we had at length, with great difficulty, safely crossed this broad estuary, our further progress was almost impeded by an impenetrable barrier of thickets and woods, through which we were obliged to cut a road with our swords. In this way we continued to move forward in a straight line, in the hopes of reaching some township. One morning, as usual, when we had again commenced marching forward in this laborious manner, Cortes himself began to find that our position was truly miserable. He could not help hearing how the men murmured against him, and cursed the whole expedition, and the terrible hunger they sustained; uttering aloud that he ought immediately to march back to Mexico, if at least he was not desirous of starving us to death. To all this suffering was added, that we now saw before us nothing but terrific mountains, which almost hid the very heavens from our view. Though some of us climbed to the tops of the highest trees, all we could see was one huge pile of mountains frowning above the other on every side. Besides this, two of our Indian guides had secretly decamped, and the third was so ill, that he was unable to move along, and had so far lost his recollection, that he could give us no information as to which way we were to bend our steps. But as Cortes was a man who never shrunk back from any difficulty, and whose active mind was never at a loss, he ordered the pilot Pedro Lopez to bring him the compass, which he placed on our map of nequen cloth above mentioned, and then desired him to point out the direction we were to take, in order to reach the nearest township. In accordance with Lopez's instructions, we commenced cutting our way through the woods in an easterly direction, and moved up the mountains. It was here that our general himself declared he should be quite at a loss what to do, if we did not reach some township by the next day.

Although every one of us would gladly have marched back to New Spain at this moment, yet, strengthened by hope, we continued our difficult route, and in a short time it pleased God we should come up to a tree which had been recently cut down, and a little further on to a small footpath. Pedro Lopez and myself, who were a good bit in advance, with several of the men, to explore the way, instantly hastened back to

inform Cortes of our discovery, and to assure him that some habitation or other must be in the immediate vicinity. Our general, with the whole of the men, were exceedingly rejoiced at this news; though we found that we had to cross a river and several marshes before we could reach any dwellings. By employing our utmost exertions, however, we soon surmounted these difficulties, and we arrived at a township, from which the inhabitants had fled on our approach, but leaving behind them a quantity of maise, beans, and other vegetables, which tasted the more savoury to us, as we were completely famished. Here our horses likewise regained their strength, and we offered up our humble thanks to God for so much mercy. On this last march, Cortes' buffoon and three soldiers, who had recently arrived from Spain, died from exhaustion. A great number of Mechoacan and Mexican Indians likewise perished, and many others, who were unable to bear the fatigues, became ill, and in despair sank down on the ground as we marched along.

As this township was quite deserted by its inhabitants, and we had no guides left, Cortes despatched myself and another captain among the mountains in search of other small villages. Others of our men also crossed the broad river, which flows here, in some canoes they found, belonging to this township, and they soon came up with a number of the inhabitants, thirty of whom, for the greater part caziques and papas, they persuaded, by kind words and promises, to accompany them to Cortes, who, with the assistance of Doña Marina, spoke to them in an affectionate manner; so that they brought us several more fowls, and a quantity of maise. They then pointed out the route we were to take, in order to reach the next township, which was called Izguatepec, the distance to which place, they said, was three days' journey, or sixty-four miles; but that on our road we should come up to another small township, which was subject to Tamaztepec, where we were then staying.

Before describing our further march, I must not forget to mention that a few Mexican chiefs, who were unable to endure the pains of hunger any longer, had secreted two or three Indians of the townships we had passed through, among their baggage. These unfortunate beings they slaughtered on our march, and baked them after the fashion of their country, between heated stones, under ground, and then devoured their flesh. We afterwards discovered that our two guides, whom we so suddenly missed, had been served in a similar manner. When Cortes was informed of this revolting circumstance, he ordered the caziques into his presence, and reprimanded them for committing such atrocities, threatening to punish them most severely if they repeated this abominable conduct. One of the Franciscan monks likewise

preached a sermon on the occasion, and he told them many holy and edifying things. In order, however, to deter the caziques from committing a similar offence, one of them was sentenced to be burnt at the stake.[46]

I will not go further into the particulars of the many hardships and privations we had to suffer. Our distress was so great, that even the performers on the sackbut, clarion, and dulcimer, who were constantly to have amused us with their instruments, the only hard work they had to do, fell ill for want of food, and so an end was put to their music.

There was only one of them who managed to force out a tune now and then, but we all grew so sick of his blowing and puffing that we told him it sounded in our ears like the mingled howls of foxes and wolves, and that a handful of maise to stay the cravings of hunger would be more acceptable than all his music.

Several persons on reading this history have asked me, why we did not kill the herd of swine which Cortes took with him? For you know, they said, that necessity breaks through all law, and Cortes would undoubtedly have distributed some of the flesh from time to time among the troops. To this I answered, that Cortes' chief butler Guinea, a man of a dubious character, gave out that the hogs had by degrees all been devoured by the alligators and sharks in crossing the rivers. However, in order that we might never catch sight of these swine, they were always kept about four days' journey behind us; though I must confess that the whole herd put together would not have fed our numerous troops for one single day, and besides this, no one ever spoke of killing them for fear of annoying Cortes.

In every township we came to, and in various other places wherever we found proper trees for the purpose, particularly the ceiba-tree, we cut the form of a cross into the bark, these being much more durable than those crosses usually constructed of two pieces of wood and stuck into the ground; besides that, the former become more and more perceptible as the bark grows. To these we likewise fastened scraps of paper, that would immediately catch the eye, and on which was written: *Cortes passed this way on such and such a day*, for the instruction of those who might be sent after us. On our march to Ciguatepec we were accompanied by above twenty Indians of Tamaztepec, in order to assist us in crossing the rivers with their canoes; some of them likewise went in advance, to acquaint the inhabitants of the townships that we came in a friendly disposition. By this so much was gained, that those who would otherwise have fled at our approach now quietly awaited our arrival without evincing the least fear.

CHAPTER CLXXVI.

How Cortes on our arrival at Ciguatepec despatches Francisco de Medina in search of Simon de Cuenca, with orders for the latter to repair with the two vessels to Triunfo de la Cruz; and what further happened.

CORTES' first care on our arrival in Ciguatepec was to gain the friendship of the caziques and of other distinguished persons of the township, and for this purpose he presented them with a number of Mexican chalchihuis stones. These people then gave him an account of a very broad river which flowed at no great distance from their township, and emptied itself into an arm of the sea, near to the township of Gueyatasta, which lay close to the larger one called Xicalango. From Ciguatepec Cortes, therefore, considered it most advisable to send some one to the north coast in search of the two transports under Simon de Cuenca, and after making the minutest inquiries respecting the route they were to take, he despatched two Spaniards thither for this purpose, the principal one of whom was Francisco de Medina, a man who was very active and prompt in everything he undertook. This is the same officer who caused an insurrection in Chamula, in our expedition under Luis Marin against Chiapa, mentioned in a former chapter.

Cortes gave him full power to share the command between himself and Cuenca, but it would have been much better if he had never given him this authority, as will presently be seen. However, Medina went down the river and found Cuenca lying at anchor with his vessels in front of Xicolango, awaiting Cortes' further commands, according to the instructions he had received. As soon as Medina stepped on board he produced his authority from our general with respect to the command, which gave rise to high words between both parties, and ended in so bloody a conflict in which the crews mingled, that they slew each other without mercy, and only seven men remained alive. But here misfortunes were not at an end, for when the Indians of Xicalango and Gueyatasta saw how the Spaniards quarrelled among themselves and weakened their strength, they fell suddenly upon those that survived, put them to death and then set fire to the vessels. Though we did not hear of all this until two years and a half had elapsed.

The caziques of Ciguatepec informed us that we were still three days' journey from Gueyacala, and that we should have to cross two

rivers, of which one was uncommonly deep and broad; after this our route would lay through an extensive moorland, full of dangerous bogs, and they assured us we should not be able to cross the rivers without canoes. Cortes therefore despatched two Spaniards with three distinguished Indians in advance, to bring him an accurate account of the state of the rivers and the marshes, and inform him what would be the easiest method of crossing them. The two soldiers who received these commands were, Pedro de Ribera and Martin Garcia, of Valencia, who was alguacil of our army, and in whom our general placed the greatest confidence. They set out on their march, explored the rivers in small canoes, and were of opinion that the only way to pass the former would be by throwing bridges across; but as for the marshes, which lay four miles further on, they had never even given them a thought, and they only brought word about the difficulty of throwing bridges across the water. Cortes then sent for myself and Gonsalo Mexia, and commissioned us to go in company of some of the chiefs of Ciguatepec to the Acallan townships, and do all in our power to gain the friendship of the inhabitants, that they might not run away as our army approached.

These Acallan townships were above twenty in number, some built on the mainland, some on the small islands which lay in the river and at the head of the estuary, so that they could only communicate with each other by means of canoes. We accordingly set out with our Indian friends, who, however, deserted us on the first night, because they were at enmity with these townships, as we subsequently learnt. We were, therefore, obliged to continue our route in the best way we could without the help of guides, and it was only with the greatest difficulty we found our way through the morasses to the first of the Acallan townships. Although on our approach the inhabitants immediately took up arms, we sought to gain their friendship by kind words and presents of glass beads, begging of them to accompany us to Malinche and take him something to eat. These people were then not aware that Cortes was advancing with so large a body of foot and horse, and showed little inclination to return with us. It was not until the following day, when they learnt from some Indian merchants what a large army Malinche had with him, that they evinced greater willingness to supply him with provisions. Though, at the same time, they told us he must wait for these until he arrived in person, when they would gladly supply him with everything that lay in their power. They could not think, they added, of entering upon the territory of Ciguatepec, where their enemies lived. While we were thus holding a

conference with these people, two Spaniards arrived with a letter from Cortes, in which he desired me to meet him on his march with as large a quantity of provisions as I could possibly collect together, for the whole of the inhabitants of Ciguatepec had suddenly fled, and not a morsel of food was to be got; he was therefore compelled to commence his march immediately, and I was to use all my endeavours to persuade the caziques to remain in their townships.

These two Spaniards also told me that our general had despatched four men up the river in search of provisions among the townships, which were said to lie in that direction. But none of these men had returned, having most probably been murdered by the inhabitants.

Cortes, therefore, began his march, and arrived in the space of two days on the banks of the broad river above mentioned. Here he displayed his usual activity of mind in superintending the construction of a bridge, which, with the utmost exertions, was completed in the space of four days of the tallest and thickest trees growing in the neighbourhood, which greatly excited the astonishment of the inhabitants of Acala. During these four days our troops had scarcely anything to eat, as they had commenced their march without any provisions whatever. And what was worse, they were totally ignorant whether any maise was to be had further on, or whether the country was at peace. Some of the veteran troops stopped the gnawing pain of hunger by cutting down a species of very tall palm-tree, which bore on the topmost branches a kind of nut, with an uncommon hard shell, these they roasted in the fire and ate the kernel.

A short time after this strong bridge had been completed, I and my companions returned to where the army lay encamped, bringing with us one hundred and thirty loads of maise, eighty fowls, some honey, some salt, and various kinds of vegetables. Though it was pretty late when we arrived, yet the whole of the men were keeping a sharp look out for us, as they were perfectly aware we had gone out in search of provisions; our general, moreover, having assured them he had good hopes they would shortly get something to eat, if at least the Indians did not kill me, as they had the four other Spaniards he had despatched in search of provisions.

As I was thus approaching the camp in the dark, the whole of our troops suddenly fell upon the provisions like ravenous wolves, and took entire possession of them, nor did they leave the smallest quantity, either for Cortes, Sandoval, or the other superior officers. "This is for Cortes!" cried they each time they forcibly carried off a load of provisions. His major-domo Carranza, and his butler Guinea, certainly

disputed the possession with them, and tugged with all their might at the sacks, but our men were determined to keep all to themselves, and continually cried out: "Cortes and you regaled yourselves with the hogs while we were famishing with hunger, and you never offered us a morsel; and now in our turn we are determined to care for nobody but ourselves!" In short, all Cortes' officials might say went for nothing, and they divided the whole of the provisions among themselves.

When Cortes heard this he stamped the ground with rage, swore he would bring the guilty persons to trial and punish them severely. However, after he had given vent to his anger for some time, and had considered the matter a little, he found that all his threats amounted to nothing. Yet he sent for me, and asked me, in a tone of reproach, why I had not defended the possession of the provisions more effectually? I replied, "That he should have despatched a small detachment to meet me on the road," although, added I, "if your excellency had formed one of the guard yourself it would have been of no avail, for hunger knows no law."

When he saw that there was no remedy, and that extreme distress alone had induced the men to act thus he became quite friendly again, and praised me in the most flattering terms. Gonsalo de Sandoval happened to be present when he was thus kindly addressing me, and I still well remember how Cortes said to me, "O! señor Bernal Diaz del Castillo, for the love you bear me, if you have concealed any provisions on the road do, I beg of you, let me share them with you! You cannot certainly have forgotten to stow some part away for yourself and your friend Sandoval!"

The tone in which he said this went to my very heart; besides that, Sandoval exclaimed, at the same moment, "I declare to Heavens I should feel grateful for a mere handful of maise to roast on the fire for my supper!"

Well, said I, when all is quiet and the whole of the troops have retired to rest, we will steal out in the depth of night and repair to the next village, where the inhabitants have put by for me twelve loads of maise, twenty fowls, three jars of honey, some salt, and have presented me besides with two females to bake my bread. We must use the utmost circumspection and fetch all this while it is yet dark, that our men may not again waylay us on the road, and likewise deprive us of these provisions.

Sandoval was so exceedingly thankful for this fair prospect of getting something to eat in a short time, that he fell about my neck and embraced me, with the assurance that he would march out with me that

very night. We accordingly left our camp in company, had the good fortune to bring in these provisions unperceived, and we regaled ourselves at our ease. Cortes upon this inquired whether the monks had been provided for? To which I replied, that God took better care of them than he did, for the soldiers had not forgotten to give them a share of the provisions they had plundered, in order that they might not perish of hunger.

I have merely mentioned all this in order to show the reader in what an awful predicament a general may be placed who penetrates with an army into an unknown country. Though Cortes was greatly feared by the troops, yet they even to a man grudged him a handful of maise to still his hunger, and Sandoval himself was obliged to go in search of provisions when he wanted any, for he durst not trust any of his men. So little confidence did one place in the other!

We had all safely passed the broad river, and marched about four miles in a straight line, when we got fixed in a terrible morass. Here all throwing in of trees and other materials to make a road was fruitless. Our horses sunk in so deep, that often their heads alone were to be seen above ground, and we thought we should never have rescued a single one of them alive. Yet we were ordered to march forward, for we should again be on firm ground at the distance of about half a bow-shot. We thus continued to move on, while our army left a deep hollow track behind it, formed of mud and water, the horses swimming, sometimes wading, through the deeper parts. At length we reached firm land, and we offered up thanks to God for our escape.

Cortes now again despatched me to the Acallan townships, in order to induce the caziques, with whom I had become very friendly, to send off some provisions to him in advance. I instantly set out on my journey, arrived towards evening in Acala, and despatched that very night three Spaniards who had accompanied me, with about one hundred Indians, to Cortes, laden with maise and other provisions. When our general gave me these instructions, he added: "This time I will await the arrival of the provisions, and stand guard over them, that I may not fare as badly as I did before." And sure enough, when they arrived, he, Sandoval, and Luis Marin took them into their own custody, and ordered them to be distributed under their own eyes.

The following day, about noon, the army arrived in Acala, the caziques of which place having met our general with a supply of provisions; but I will break off here, and relate what further took place in the next chapter.

CHAPTER CLXXVII.

Cortes' further plans after his arrival among the Acallan townships; how he orders the powerful cazique of Mexico Quauhtemoctzin, and the king of Tlacupa, to be hung; his reasons for doing this; and of other matters.

After Cortes had arrived in Gueacala, and had been thus kindly received by the caziques, he told them all manner of fine things, through our interpretess, Doña Marina, and he presented them with various kinds of Spanish toys, all of which appeared vastly to amuse them. They willingly supplied us with provisions, and Cortes questioned them as to the route we were next to take, and whether they had seen other people like unto us, with beards, and riding on horseback, or any strange vessels off the coast?

To which they replied, that eight days further on there were numbers of people with beards, who had women of Castile, horses, and three acales (for so they term vessels) with them. Respecting our inquiries about the direction in which we were to march, they answered by laying before us a large piece of cotton cloth, on which were drawn all the rivers, swamps, morasses, and townships of the country.

Cortes was excessively rejoiced at all this, and he requested the caziques, as their population was so numerous, to bring their canoes, and throw bridges across the river for us. To this they answered, that their townships were indeed above twenty in number, but that the greater part of these refused obedience to them, particularly those which lay between the rivers. It would therefore be necessary, they added, for him to send a number of his teules—so they termed us—thither, and command them to furnish him with provisions.

Cortes followed their advice, and commissioned Diego de Mazariegos, cousin to the treasurer Estrado, whom Cortes had appointed governor of Mexico, to repair to the latter townships. Cortes was very partial to Mazariegos, and was desirous of distinguishing the man, by conferring this command upon him. But as Mazariegos had very little experience in the manners and customs of these countries, Cortes desired him in confidence to request me to accompany him, and advised him to act upon my advice in all matters. This hint was not lost upon Mazariegos, who did not neglect to follow our general's counsel. I have not mentioned this in praise of myself, for it was well known to the whole of the troops, and Cortes himself, in his despatches to the emperor

respecting the expedition to the Honduras, and which I read myself, also detailed this circumstance.

The caziques readily furnished us with the necessary canoes, in which eighty of us, with Mazariegos, set out. We arrived safely in the townships above mentioned, met with the most friendly reception, and the inhabitants gave us as large a quantity of provisions as they could possibly spare. We therefore loaded one hundred canoes with maise, fowls, honey, and salt, taking along with us besides ten female slaves, who had been presented to us, and the caziques accompanied us themselves on our return, to pay their respects to Cortes. After the lapse of three days, however, most of the caziques suddenly left, and we had only three guides remaining, with whom we continued our march. We had two rivers to pass, one of which we crossed by means of a bridge, that broke down before we had all stepped on land; the other we ferried over in canoes, and in this way we reached another of the Acallan townships, which was quite deserted by its inhabitants; but we found abundance of provisions, which they had concealed among the hills on our approach.

I have now to relate a circumstance of a very different nature, which occasioned much grief to us all. Quauhtemoctzin and other Mexican chiefs who accompanied our army had, it would appear, spoken among themselves, or secretly determined to put the whole of us to death, then march back to Mexico, and assemble the whole armed power of the country against the few remaining Spaniards, and raise an insurrection throughout the whole of New Spain. This circumstance was discovered to Cortes by two distinguished Mexican chiefs, one of whom was named Tapia, and the other Juan Velasquez. This latter personage had been Quauhtemoctzin's captain-general during our war with Mexico, and his testimony was borne out by the investigation which Cortes made into the matter, and by the confession of several of the caziques themselves who were implicated in the conspiracy. These men fearlessly declared, that seeing how carelessly and dispiritedly we roamed about; that numbers of the men were ill from want of food; that four of our musicians, with the buffoon and five soldiers, had died of hunger; and that three other men had turned back, more willing to run the risk of reaching Mexico again than of moving forward, the thought struck them that they could not do better than fall suddenly upon us while we were crossing some river or marsh, particularly as they were upwards of 3000 in number, all armed with lances, and several of them with swords. Quauhtemoctzin did not hesitate to acknowledge that these men had spoken the truth, but added that the conspiracy did not

emanate with him, and that he himself had never for a moment contemplated carrying it into effect, but had merely spoken about it with the other caziques. All the cazique of Tlacupa confessed was, his having declared to Quauhtemoctzin that it was better to die at once than daily to have death before their eyes on these fatiguing marches, and see their countrymen and relations perish with hunger.

These were sufficient proofs for Cortes, and without any further ceremony he sentenced Quauhtemoctzin and his cousin the king of Tlacupa to the gallows. Before, however, this sentence was executed, the Franciscan monks, with the assistance of Doña Marina, strove to comfort these unfortunate men, and commended their souls to God. When they were being led to the place of execution, Quauhtemoctzin turned to Cortes, and said: "Oh Malinche! I have for a long time perceived, from your false words, that you had destined me for such a death, because I did not lay violent hands on myself when you entered my city of Mexico! Why are you thus going to put me unjustly to death? God will one time ask this of you!"

The king of Tlacupa said, he could only rejoice in a death which he would be permitted to suffer with his monarch Quauhtemoctzin.

Previous to their being hung, both these unhappy caziques confessed to father Juan, who understood the Mexican language, and they begged of him to commend their souls to God. For Indians they were good Christians, and they died in the true faith, and fully believed in our holy religion.

The death of these two monarchs grieved me excessively, for I had known them in all their glory, and on our march they honoured me with their friendship, and showed me many little attentions; for instance, they would often order their servants to go in quest of fodder for my horse; besides which, they were innocent of the guilt imputed to them, and it was the opinion of all who accompanied this expedition that they were put to death unjustly.

But I will leave this miserable subject, and return to our march, on which we henceforth observed the utmost vigilance, for we greatly feared the Mexicans might rise up in arms against us, after they had thus beheld their monarch ignominiously hung by the neck from a tree. But hunger, fatigue, and sickness weighed heavier upon their minds than the misfortune of Quauhtemoctzin.

On our further march we came up to a river, which we crossed by means of canoes, and soon after we arrived in a township which was entirely deserted by its inhabitants. However, in searching for provisions in some houses lying in the neighbourhood, we discovered eight

Indian papas, who, after a little persuasion, followed us to the township, where they were brought into the presence of Cortes, who, by means of Doña Marina, spoke very kindly to them, telling them to banish all fear from their minds, and to go and call their countrymen. The papas said they were very willing to fulfil his commands, but they must beg of him not to allow any one to touch the idols which stood in a building adjoining Cortes' quarters. Our general promised them faithfully that no harm should be done the idols, but observed, that they were mere lumps of clay and wood, wicked things, which were unworthy of the veneration they paid them, and that the whole of their idolatrous worship was the work of Satan. The Franciscan monks also put several questions to the papas respecting their idol worship, to which they returned very intelligent answers, promising for the future to abolish it altogether.

Thirty loads of maise and some fowls were now soon brought us, and Cortes inquired of the papas how many suns (that is to say days' journey) it was from this place to the people with the beards and horses. They replied, that it was seven suns to the township of Nito, where the men with the horses had settled, and they would themselves show us the way to the next township, but that on our road thither we should have to pass one night in an uninhabited village.

Near to the building in which the idols were placed there stood a ceiba tree of an immense size, in the bark of which Cortes ordered a large cross to be cut. Our general had for some time appeared in low spirits, and very pensive. The thoughts of our fatiguing march, the number of Spaniards who had fallen ill, the still greater number of our Mexican troops that died away, and perhaps also the regret he felt for having put Quauhtemoctzin and the king of Tlacupa to death without any trial, constantly preyed upon his mind, and left him no peace either night or day; so that he would rise up from his bed in the depth of night to stroll about, which also happened to be the case in this township. He got up in the dark from his bed, in order to pass into an adjoining large apartment, where a number of idols stood, and where the Indians were accustomed to hold their meetings. It seems that he forgot the two steps which led down into it, so that he fell rather heavily, and bruised his head severely. This wound he had secretly dressed, nor did he himself ever mention the accident to any one.

The next morning, very early, we again broke up our quarters, and our guides led us exactly in the direction they had previously described, and we arrived, without anything happening to us worthy of mention, in front of a morass, which lay at the foot of very high mountains,

where we encamped for the night. With break of day we again continued our march, and arrived about the hour of high mass, at a township which lay in the midst of this extensive morass. This town had every appearance of having been recently built, and indeed we found that the houses had only been erected a few days before our arrival. It was surrounded by a double entrenchment, formed of the trunks of large trees, encircled by other huge poles stuck in perpendicularly. The approaches were secured by a deep fosse, and they were protected by a double inclosure of a circular form: one of which was supplied with a regular battlement, small towers and loop-holes; the other was very high and strongly built of large stones, and was likewise provided with a battlement. As the other side was covered by the morass this place might, in every sense of the word, be called a fortress.

When we entered the town we did not meet with a single inhabitant, but were surprised to find in the houses quantities of boiled turkeys and other fowls, dressed according to Indian fashion, with hot peppers and maise cakes, which they call tamales. We were perfectly astonished at this great abundance, and we made all manner of speculations on so extraordinary a sight. Another large building we found filled with bows and arrows and small darts. We now carefully searched the surrounding neighbourhood, but we could nowhere see any maise plantations.

While we were thus looking about us we observed fifteen Indians approaching from the side of the morass, who, on coming up, touched the ground with their hands and kissed it. These were the chiefs of the township, and they begged of Cortes, in a half-crying tone of voice, not to set fire to their buildings. They had, they said, but recently settled in this spot, and had been compelled to fortify themselves thus strongly from fear of their enemies; whom, if I do not mistake, they termed Lacandones. These people had burnt down their two former towns which lay on the plain, had plundered them of all they possessed, and had killed numbers of their countrymen. On our further march we should pass over the ashes and ruins of their former habitations. These chiefs then related the cause of their enmity, and described their mode of warfare. Upon this Cortes inquired of them what had induced them to dress so large a quantity of turkeys and other fowls? To which the chiefs replied, that they again expected an attack from the Lacandones, who would be sure, if victorious, to carry off all their property and fowls; they had therefore determined to eat up all their provisions before the enemy arrived; but if they

themselves proved victorious, they would march into the enemy's towns, plunder them in their turn, and so make up for their recent losses.

Cortes told them he was extremely sorry to hear of their wars, but that it was not in his power to render them any assistance at present, as he was obliged to continue his march. This tribe, to whom the two other large townships also belonged, through which we passed on the following day, were termed the Mazotecs, a name which, in their language, denotes the land or the nation of the wild deer, and this was indeed a most appropriate appellation, as the reader will presently see.

From this place we took two guides with us, who led us over the ruins of the two townships above mentioned, and gave us some further account of the Spaniards whom we should find at a considerable distance further on.

CHAPTER CLXXVIII.

We continue our march, and what further happened to us.

After we had quitted this fortified township, we came into an extensive open plain, on which, as far as the eye could reach, there was not a tree to be seen, and the heat was more excessive than we had ever experienced before. This plain abounded with wild deer, which were so little shy that we could easily catch them with our horses, and in a very short time we killed upwards of twenty. On questioning our guides how it came that these animals were neither afraid of our horses nor anything else, and so easily to be caught, they answered that the Mazotecs revered them as beings of a superior nature, because they appeared such to them from their external form, and their idols had strictly commanded the people not to kill or in any way to scare them.

One of Cortes' relatives, named Palacios Rubios, lost his horse in chasing these deer, for he galloped up and down the plain until the fat melted in its body, and the poor animal dropped down dead all of a sudden.[47]

It was not long before we came to the townships which had been destroyed, and certainly they presented a most miserable picture to the eye. On our further march, our scouts came up with two Indians who belonged to a town which lay in advance of us. These men were returning from the chase, and had killed a large lion and a number of iquanas,[48] which resemble small serpents, and are excellent food. Our

scouts then inquired of these Indians whether there was any township in the neighbourhood, to which they answered in the affirmative, and offered their services to conduct them thither. This place lay on an island in the fresh water, and could only be approached by means of canoes on the side we were advancing, which compelled us to march to the distance of two miles along the water until we came to a spot where the latter was sufficiently shallow for us to wade through, though even then it reached almost up to our arms. Only a few of the inhabitants had remained in the town, the rest having fled immediately on our approach, with all their property which they concealed among the reeds in the neighbourhood of their cultivated fields; but several of our men quartered themselves for the night among the maise plantations, feasted plentifully off the fruit, and took care to provision themselves for the next day's march.

Adjoining this township lay a fresh water lake of considerable extent, which abounded with large fish covered with sharp prickles, and very much resembled the disgusting-looking and insipid-flavoured fish called the shad. By means of a few old cloaks and tattered nets which we found in the deserted habitations, we dragged the lake from one end to the other, and succeeded in taking above 1000 of these ugly fish. Among the fields we likewise captured a few of the inhabitants, who were requested by Doña Marina to guide us to the towns where the men with the beards and horses had settled. With this they readily complied, for they soon perceived it was not our intention to harm them in any way, and five of them immediately accompanied us. At first the road along which we marched was very broad, but this gradually became narrower as we approached a broad river or estuary, which was much frequented by canoes. Here the inhabitants ferried across to the opposite township of Tayasal, situated on an island, and of which the houses and temples were covered with white plaster, so that they could be seen to a vast distance. All the lesser townships in this neighbourhood were subject to the first mentioned.

As our road was becoming very narrow, and we found that it terminated in a small path, we resolved to encamp for the night in the vicinity of some elevated mountains. During the night-time Cortes despatched four companies along the footpaths which led to the estuary, in search of guides; and, indeed, they had the good fortune to capture ten Indians and two females, with two canoes laden with maise and salt. When these people were brought into the presence of Cortes, he spoke to them in the most affectionate terms, through Doña Marina, whom they informed that they were inhabitants of a township which lay on

an island sixteen miles further on. Our general then despatched the lesser of the two canoes, with four of the Indians and two Spaniards, thither, in order to request the caziques to come with their canoes and ferry us over the water, and our men were to present them with some Spanish toys, and assure them that no harm should be done their persons.

The whole of the troops now marched forward until they arrived on the banks of the broad river, where, to our great joy, we found the caziques, besides several other distinguished personages waiting for us with five canoes, a supply of maise, and a number of fowls. Our general addressed the caziques very affectionately; and, after they had held some excellent discourses with him, he embarked with thirty crossbow-men in the canoes, and so proceeded with the chiefs to their town. When arrived there, they set before him the best of everything in the shape of provisions, and presented him with several of their cloaks and a small quantity of gold, though of inferior quality. According to their assurances, there were men like ourselves in two different townships, namely, in Nito, which we called San Gil de Buena Vista, lying on the north coast, and in Naco, which lay in the interior of the country. According to their account, these two towns were ten days' journey distant from each other. We were very much surprised that Oli should thus have divided his troops, we being at that moment ignorant of the existence of Buena Vista, founded by Avila.

The whole of our troops passed the broad river in canoes, and we encamped for the night eight miles further on to wait for Cortes, who still continued at the township above mentioned. On returning to the main body, he ordered one of the horses, which had likewise been overheated in chasing the deer, to be left behind. While we were staying here, one of our negroes and two female slaves ran away. Even three Spaniards chose rather to stay here and run the risk of being murdered by the Indians than to undergo the fatigues of our march for another three days. I myself was far from well; the excessive heat of the sun had affected my head, and I scarcely knew how to bear myself. But even this distressing heat was more welcome to us than the torrents of rain which began to fall, and lasted, without intermission, for three days; nevertheless, we were obliged to continue our march, as we had not a morsel of food left. In the space of two days we arrived at some small hills, which were completely covered with stones, and these so sharp that they cut like razors. Our men gave themselves considerable trouble in searching for some other road in order to avoid these stones, but all their endeavours were fruitless, though they went to a distance

of above four miles. This part of our march was most dangerous for the horses; for, as it still continued to rain, they constantly stumbled, and were sure to cut their knees, and even their bellies in the most dreadful manner on the pointed stones; but the descent was still more difficult, eight of the horses being killed and many others shockingly lacerated, and one of the soldiers named Palacios Rubios, a relative of Cortes, had the misfortune to break his leg. We could not, therefore, feel sufficiently thankful to the Almighty when at last we got clear of this mountain of flint, as we ever after termed it.

As we had now advanced within a short distance of the township Taica, we were not a little rejoiced at the thoughts that we should again get some food. In the neighbourhood of this place we came to a river which poured down over the precipices of a very high mountain, and was so much swollen by the rain of the three last days that it rolled down in immense volumes, and the roaring noise of the flood, as it dashed from one precipice to another, could be distinctly heard at the distance of eight miles. There was no other possibility of passing this turbulent river but by throwing a bridge across from one rock to the other. We accordingly set to work with the utmost diligence, and in the space of three days we constructed a bridge of the largest trees, and the whole of us passed safely to the other side of these cataracts. While we were engaged in building this bridge, the Indians of Taica had gained sufficient time to run off and conceal all their provisions. When, therefore, we arrived in this township and met not a single inhabitant, nor found the smallest particle of food to still our hunger, we stared at each other in dismay when we considered our dreadful position. The hope of soon obtaining food had alone inspired us with sufficient courage and strength to undertake the construction of this bridge. For myself I do not hesitate to acknowledge that I never, in the whole course of my life, felt so distressed in mind as on this occasion, when I found that I could neither procure food for my men nor myself. Added to all this, we had overheated ourselves by marching about the neighbourhood in a burning sun for a couple of hours in search of the inhabitants. It happened to be the eve of Easter day, and I shall never forget this day as long as I live; and the reader can easily imagine what a pleasant Easter we spent without a morsel of food. We should have considered ourselves blessed and happy if we had only had a handful of maise.

In this great distress Cortes despatched all his servants and grooms with our guides to traverse the hills in search of maise plantations. On the first day of Easter they indeed returned with some maise, but

all they had was scarcely a bushel, and what was this among so many mouths! Cortes, seeing that our distress was each moment increasing, ordered myself and several other soldiers, mostly of those who had settled in Guacasualco, into his presence, and told us our condition was at present so lamentable, that he must beg of us to search the whole country round to procure some kind of provisions or other. Pedro de Ircio happened to be present when Cortes was thus soliciting us; and as he was always ready with a mouthful of words, he supplicated Cortes to give him the command of this foraging party. As far as regards myself, replied our general, go, and may God be with you! But as I was well aware that Ircio was a miserable pedestrian, and, instead of being any assistance to us, would only be a troublesome companion, I secretly communicated what I thought to Cortes and my friend Sandoval, and requested that he might not be sent with us, as a person with splay feet as he had was least of all able to make his way through bogs and marshes; added to which, he was all talk, but seldom acted, and altogether unable to bear the fatigues of a long march. Our general, accordingly, followed my advice, and he countermanded the order he had given to Ircio.

I now set out with four soldiers and two guides. First we passed several rivers of considerable depth, then crossed some marshes until we arrived at a small village, whither most of the inhabitants of the deserted township had fled. Here we had likewise the good fortune to find four houses, completely filled with maise, also about thirty fowls, and a few melons. We captured four Indians and three women, and we now celebrated Easter right jollily. Above a thousand Mexicans whom Cortes had sent after us arrived in the night, and we immediately loaded as much of the maise on them as they could carry, with which they returned to our camp: we at the same time sent above twenty fowls for Cortes and Sandoval, besides the prisoners we had taken, and then placed a watch over these storehouses in order that the inhabitants might not set fire to them during the night, or carry off their contents. The following day we continued our march, and discovered some more buildings full of maise, fowls, and various kinds of vegetables. Here I made myself a little ink, and I wrote a letter to our general on a small piece of drum skin, requesting him to send me a detachment of Indian troops, as we had found another storehouse full of provisions. The next day, accordingly, above thirty Spaniards and 500 Indians arrived, and each took as heavy a load of provisions as he could possibly carry. In this way God in his great mercy again relieved us in the utmost distress, and we halted five days in Taica to rest from our fatigues.

The bridges which we threw across the numerous rivers we passed on our march had been so strongly put together that several of them were still to be seen for many years after; and subsequently, when all these provinces were subjected to the Spanish crown, our countrymen regarded them in astonishment, and exclaimed, *These are the bridges of Cortes!* in the same way as people say, *These are the columns of Hercules!*

After marching forward for two more days, we arrived at a township called Tania, which was also deserted by its inhabitants, though we found some maise and other provisions, but not in sufficient quantity for our troops. On thoroughly exploring the country round about, we discovered that we were now completely surrounded by rivers and small streams; the guides we had brought with us ran away in the night from the soldiers who had charge of them. These men had but recently arrived from New Spain, and it appears had been overtaken by sleep; our general, on receiving the first information of their neglect of duty, was going to have them severely punished; however, he was at length induced to pardon them, and he sent out another party to explore our route; but as this neighbourhood abounded with rivers, and it continued to rain very fast, almost the whole of the country was inundated; besides which, we could have no hopes of meeting with any of the inhabitants. Thus situated, in the midst of the waters, we scarcely knew which way to turn, and our distress and alarm were each moment increasing. Cortes himself appeared considerably disheartened, and said, with a good deal of ill humour, to Ircio, and other officers who came with him from Mexico: "I should like to know which of you will volunteer to go out in search of some Indian guide, or to discover a way out of these waters; for it is shameful to leave everything to the veterans, who have accompanied us from Guacasualco!"

After this reproach, Ircio, with some of his friends and acquaintances, offered himself, and he actually marched out for this purpose. Marmalejo, a person of distinction, likewise went out with six men; so also Santacruz Burgalez, with a like number. Each of these three small detachments went off in a different direction, and they wandered about for three days, but returned with the disheartening news, that wherever they came there was nothing but water to be seen. Cortes was ready to burst with vexation when they told him this, and he desired Sandoval to go and speak with me, and request me, in his name, to try if I could not discover some road, to rescue the army from its present perilous position. All this he said in an affectionate and begging tone of voice, as he very well knew that I was by no means in good health:

and indeed I was suffering with a bad fever, for which reason I had refused to accompany my intimate friend Marmalejo, to whom I said: "You expect me to do everything; let others bestir themselves as well!" First I refused Sandoval also, but he came a second time to my hut, and begged very hard of me to comply with our general's request, who had said, that next to God he could only expect assistance from me at this juncture. Though I felt very ill, yet my honour would not allow me to refuse any longer, and I desired that Hernando de Aguilar and a certain Hinojosa might accompany me, both of whom were men I well knew could bear any fatigues.

We three then set out from our camp, and followed the course of a rivulet to some considerable distance, until we came in view of a hill lying on the opposite side of the water, and on which we observed several branches of trees that had been stuck in the ground as if to serve for some signal. We now marched in this direction for upwards of an hour, and after finding our way out between the rivers, we came to some small huts, which had a short time previously been deserted by their owners. Continuing our course in this direction, we observed at some distance from us, on the slope of a hill, some maise plantations lying about an isolated dwelling, in which we distinctly heard the sound of human voices. As the sun was by this time nearly gone down, we concealed ourselves among the bushes until late in the night, when we thought the inmates of the house were all fast asleep. We then moved forward in the utmost silence up to this habitation, broke suddenly into it, and captured three Indians, an old woman, and two other young females, who were uncommonly pretty. We only found two fowls and a small quantity of maise, with which, and the whole of these Indians, we returned highly rejoiced to our encampment. Sandoval had kept a look out for us until late in the evening, and he was the first to observe us at a distance, on our return. He could scarcely contain himself for joy when he recognized us, and he hastened to inform Cortes, to whom no news could be more acceptable than the fact of our safe return. "Indeed," said Sandoval, on this occasion, to Pedro de Ircio, "Bernal Diaz del Castillo remarked well some time ago, on going out in search of provisions, that this required men of great activity, and not people who thought of nothing else on the road but of their pretty stories of the count of Ureña and his son Don Pedro Giron!" for this was the constant theme of friend Ircio. "He had good reasons for saying so, and you need not reproach him, for speaking in your dispraise to our general and myself."

These words caused a general laughter at Ircio's expense, and Sandoval

purposely procured me this little triumph, because he knew I owed the former a grudge.

When I came into the presence of Cortes, he thanked me in the kindest terms, and said: "I have never found you at a loss in time of need!"

But why should I repeat these flattering sentences? for at most they are mere empty sounds, and little profit to any one: at least, I gained nothing by these fine words, excepting that when this perilous expedition was subsequently the topic of conversation in Mexico, my name was always mentioned with praise.

Cortes, on questioning the Indians respecting the country, learnt from them, that if we followed the course of a certain rivulet we should arrive, after two days' journey, in a township called Oculizti, which consisted of upwards of two hundred houses, but had been deserted a few days previously by its inhabitants. We accordingly marched down the rivulet, and arrived at several large huts belonging to Indian merchants, who rested here on their journeys. We passed the night in these dwellings, and the following day we continued our march along the same stream for two miles, when we came to a good road, which brought us before sunset to Coliste, where we found maise and plenty of vegetables, and, suspended in a temple, an old Spanish cap and a shoe, which had been dedicated to the idols there. Several of our men searched some hollows in the neighbourhood, and soon discovered two aged Indians and four women, who were immediately brought into the presence of our general. On being questioned by Doña Marina about the town where the Spaniards had settled, they answered, that it lay on the sea coast, about five days' journey from our camp, but that on our road thither we should not see a single Indian township.

On this information, Cortes instantly despatched Sandoval, with six men on foot, to the sea coast, in the direction the Indians had pointed out, in order to learn, if possible, what number of Spanish troops Christobal de Oli had under his command, for at that time we were still ignorant of what had taken place there.

Our general's plan was to fall upon Oli during the night, when he least dreamt of our approach, and to take him prisoner, with all his troops. Sandoval took three Indian guides with him from Oculizti, and set out on his journey. When he had arrived on the north coast, and was marching along the beach, he espied a canoe making for the land with sails and paddles. He therefore hid himself behind a rising ground until the vessel should have run ashore. This canoe belonged to some Indian merchants, was laden with salt and maise, and was destined for the large river which flows into the Golfo Dulce.

In the night time Sandoval sallied forth from his hiding place, captured all the crew, then stepped into the canoe with two of his companions and the three guides, and desired the Indian merchants to row him along the coast, while the four other Spaniards followed by land. Sandoval was sure the great river could not be far distant, and in this he was not deceived, for he entered it soon after, and he had the good fortune to come up with four Spaniards of the new town founded by Gil Gonsalez de Avila. These men had just arrived in a canoe from an excursion in search of provisions, of which there was an uncommon scarcity in the colony. The whole of the inhabitants were suffering from ill health, and durst not venture into the neighbourhood of the town to search for provisions, as they were at enmity with the Indians, who had already killed ten of their number since Avila's departure for Mexico.

When Sandoval was approaching in the canoe, he found these Spaniards busily occupied in gathering cocoa nuts. Two of them, who had climbed up the tree, were the first to observe the strange vessel, and they immediately called out to their companions below. The whole of them were so astonished and alarmed, that they scarcely knew whether they should run away or stop where they were; but on Sandoval coming up, and addressing them in a friendly manner, they took courage, and related to him the whole history of the foundation of their colony, the misfortune which befel the fleet of Las Casas, his and Avila's capture by Oli, the execution of the latter at Naco, and the subsequent departure of the two first-mentioned officers for Mexico: then gave him a full description of the miserable condition of the colony mentioned, the number of the inhabitants, and their great suffering from want of food; and stated, that a few days previously they had hung the commandant of the town, Armenta, because he had refused to grant them permission to return to Cuba.

Sandoval considered it best to take these men along with him to Cortes, in order that our approach might not be made known to the colony. One of Sandoval's soldiers, named Alonso Ortiz, a native of the town San Pedro, begged that he might be allowed to start an hour before the rest, to gain a handsome reward, by being the first to announce this joyful news to our troops. This favour Sandoval readily granted him, and certainly no news could have been more welcome to us all; for we now fully believed that all our fatigues and perils were at an end, and we never thought for a moment that we should have to suffer even greater hardships than we had hitherto. Alonso de Ortiz was well rewarded for the haste he had made, for Cortes presented

him with a fine gray horse, which we generally termed the Moor's head; besides this, every one of us gave him some other little presents. Shortly after, Sandoval himself arrived, with the other Spaniards, who told Cortes what I have above mentioned. They also informed him that two miles further on there was a harbour, in which a vessel was being fitted out, to convey the colonists to Cuba. The commandant Armenta, they added, had obstinately refused to allow them to depart; for which reason, and because he had scourged a Spanish priest, who had caused an insurrection in the town, the inhabitants rebelled against him, hung him, and appointed a certain Antonio Nieto commandant in his stead. In the meantime, at the town of San Gil de Buena Vista, there was nothing but lamentation and grief, when the Spaniards, who had been sent out in quest of provisions, did not return in the evening, and every one thought they must either have been massacred by the Indians or devoured by the wild beasts. One of the Spaniards who had returned with Sandoval was a married man, and his wife broke out into loud lamentations at his supposed death. The whole of the inhabitants went to the church, and a funeral sermon was preached by the priest Velasquez, and prayers were offered up for the souls of the dead.

Cortes now marched, with the whole of his troops, in the direction of the sea coast, the distance to which was full twenty-four miles, but our further progress was retarded for a considerable time by a deep arm of the sea, where we were obliged to wait until low water before we could pass over, partly swimming and partly wading across, which detained us until noon. In this way we at length arrived at the broad river of the Golfo Dulce, which Cortes and six soldiers were the first to cross, in order to reach the new town. Two canoes, one which Sandoval had captured on the coast, and the other belonging to the colonists, were fastened together, in which our general, with six men, and a few of his servants, embarked, and was ferried across the water. Upon this a few of the horses were swum across, the grooms holding the animals by the bridles, which were kept as short as possible, for fear of the former upsetting the canoes.

Cortes left strict commands that no one was to pass the river until further orders, which he would send in writing. The passage across this rapid stream was indeed excessively dangerous, and Cortes himself regretted that he had thus risked his life unnecessarily.

CHAPTER CLXXIX.

How Cortes entered the town founded by Gil Gonsalez de Avila; the great joy of the inhabitants at his arrival, and what he further did there.

The town of Buena Vista, which Avila had founded in this neighbourhood, lay about eight miles from the broad river of the Golfo Dulce, near to the sea shore, whither Cortes immediately repaired with his small body of men, after crossing the river. When he entered the town, the arrival of strangers on horseback and others on foot, in the first moments, spread a great consternation among the inhabitants, but as soon as they learnt that it was the man whose fame was spread through the whole of these provinces and New Spain, they were almost overcome with joy. All the inhabitants instantly assembled to wait upon him and to congratulate him upon his safe arrival. Our general received them in the kindest manner possible, and then ordered the commandant Nieto to load the two boats belonging to the town, and all the canoes he could get with cassave bread, and despatch them to Sandoval. The commandant immediately set about to fulfil these commands, but was unable to collect more than fifty pounds of this bread, as the colonists had had no other food than the fruits which they gathered from the trees, some vegetables, and what fish they could catch. Even this small quantity of cassave bread had been set apart for their voyage to Cuba.

With these provisions the two boats, manned with eight sailors, left for the place where Sandoval was encamped with our troops. Cortes, in a letter to the latter officer, desired that he, with Luis Marin, should cross the last over the broad river, and was particularly cautioned not to allow more than a certain number of the men to be ferried across at a time on account of the rapidity of the stream. No horses were to be taken across by the canoes, and even the boats were not to take more than two at a time.

When these vessels arrived there immediately rose a dispute as to whom should be ferried across first, and Saavedra, with his brother Avalus, pretended to have a prior claim, because they happened to be related to Cortes, but Sandoval maintained that this honour was unquestionably due to the three reverend monks. Saavedra persisted, however, that as a relation of Cortes the precedence was due to him, and answered Sandoval in very unbecoming terms, whose blood now also began to boil, and the dispute rose to so high a pitch that Saavedra

drew his dagger. Sandoval, who was standing up to his knees in the water to prevent the boats being overloaded, rushed upon his antagonist, and, seizing him by the hand in which he held the dagger, he dragged him headlong into the water. If the rest of us had not hastened up and parted them, Saavedra would most likely have ended his life in this affray, for the troops, almost to a man, were on Sandoval's side.

Four whole days were consumed before all our men had crossed over, during which time we had nothing to eat but the nuts we gathered from some low palm-trees, which we roasted on the fire and ate the kernels. One of our soldiers, named Tarifa, ventured across the river with his horse in a canoe, was upset, and both were most likely drowned, for no traces could be found of either. Two other horses met with a similar fate, one of which was the property of Solis Casquete, who behaved like a madman when he found his horse was lost, and wished our general, with the whole expedition, in the infernal regions.

The excessive hunger we endured during the time we were occupied in ferrying across, created altogether great discontent among the troops, and they murmured loudly against Cortes, and this dreadful march. When we arrived in the town we found our condition very little bettered, for there was neither any bread in the storehouses nor in the dwellings of the colonists; who, in the bargain, were even unacquainted with the surrounding neighbourhood, and only knew the way to two townships, which had long ago been deserted by the inhabitants. Cortes' first care was to adopt some means for obtaining provisions; he, therefore, instantly despatched Luis Marin, with the soldiers of Guacasualco into the country, in search of maise. How far we succeeded in this I will relate in the following chapter.

CHAPTER CLXXX.

How eighty of us on the second day after our arrival in Buena Vista, marched out under the command of Luis Marin to explore the country and to search for provisions.

The population of the town of Buena Vista consisted of forty Spaniards, four Spanish ladies and two mulattoes. The whole of these people were suffering from ill health, and had a yellow sickly appearance about them. They had no provisions, and suffered as much from hunger as we did ourselves, nor could any one tell where we were

to go in search of maise for this purpose. Cortes, therefore, saw that there was not a moment to be lost, and he despatched Luis Marin, with the men of Guacasualco, into the country.

We were altogether eighty in number, and we all set out on foot, in order first to see whether horses would be able to traverse the country. An Indian, of Cuba, accompanied us as guide to some townships which lay thirty-two miles further up the country. When we reached these we found, to our inexpressible joy, that they contained great abundance of maise, beans, and other vegetables; besides that, the whole neighbourhood was literally sown with cocoa-nut trees. We first feasted sumptuously ourselves and then despatched a courier to our general, desiring him to send us all the Mexican troops to fetch away the maise, forwarding him in advance ten bushels of the latter as a supply for the moment, and begged of him to send our horses to us.

When Cortes learnt that we had arrived in so fertile a neighbourhood, and was told by some Indian merchants that the road to Naco, where Christobal de Oli was beheaded, led through the township where we were staying, he ordered Sandoval to follow us with the greater part of the remaining troops, and not to leave this township until he should receive further instructions.

Sandoval, on arriving in our camp, was not a little delighted to find us thus surrounded by plenty, and he immediately despatched the Mexicans with thirty bushels of maise to Cortes, who distributed this welcome supply among the colonists, and as they had not been accustomed for a length of time to any other nourishment than fruit and a little cassave bread, they ate so ravenously of the maise that the greater part fell ill in consequence, and seven of them died.

During this great distress for want of provisions, it pleased the Almighty that a vessel should run into the harbour from Cuba, having on board seven passengers, seven horses, forty pigs, eight barrels of pickled meat, and a large quantity of cassave bread. The cargo belonged to a certain Antonio de Comargo, and Cortes purchased the whole of it upon credit, distributing a great part of the provisions among the colonists; but the consequences again proved fatal to many of these unfortunate persons, for they had become so enfeebled, that their stomachs were unable to bear this very nourishing food, which brought on dysentery, and ten more of them died.

As this vessel had brought a few soldiers and had eight sailors on board, Cortes determined to embark in her and sail up the river to visit the townships which lay on the banks, and to explore the interior of the country. He also ordered one of the brigantines of Gil Gonsalez

de Avila to be repaired, and a boat to be constructed in the shape of those used in unloading vessels; also four canoes, to be securely fastened together. On board these vessels Cortes embarked with thirty soldiers, the eight sailors, and twenty Mexicans. He may have sailed up the river to the distance of about forty miles, when he came to a large lake, which, to judge from the measurement of the eye, was about twenty-four miles in breadth, and its banks were quite uninhabited, as the whole surrounding country was subject to frequent inundations. Further up, the river continually became more rapid, until the vessels arrived at some cataracts, which none of them were able to pass; Cortes, therefore, landed his men here, and, after leaving six Spaniards in charge of the vessels, he commenced his march up the country along a very narrow path. First, he arrived at some townships which were deserted by the inhabitants, and then to a few maise plantations, in which he captured three Indians, whom he took along with him as guides. These people conducted him to several small villages, where there was abundance of maise and fowls. The inhabitants here also kept pheasants, (which they call sacachueles,) tame partridges, and pigeons. This breeding of partridges as domestic birds I never observed in any other part of the country but in the townships on the Golfo Dulce. From this place Cortes took new guides, and next arrived in some townships which are called Cinacatan-Tencintle. The whole surrounding neighbourhood was covered with maise, cacao, and cotton plantations. When Cortes had approached within a short distance, he heard the sound of drums, trumpets, and a noise as if the Indians were in the midst of some festive orgie. Our general then concealed himself with his men on a rising ground, in order to watch for a favorable opportunity of falling upon these Bacchanalians. This he accordingly did before they were in the least aware of it, and captured ten men and fifteen women. The rest of the Indians fled to their town, armed themselves, and commenced flying their arrows at us. Cortes immediately fell upon them, and very soon cut down eight of their chiefs, which brought the others to their senses, and they despatched four old men, of whom two were papas, to our general, with a trifling present in gold, and begged hard that the prisoners might be restored to them. Cortes spoke to them through Doña Marina, who had accompanied the detachment with her husband Juan Xaramillo, and gave them to understand that they should send maise, fowls, salt, and a large supply of other provisions to our vessels. If they complied with this he would immediately restore the prisoners to their families. They accordingly set their canoes afloat, which lay in a hollow communicating with the

river, and loaded them with the required provisions; but as Cortes did not release all the prisoners at once, and detained three men with their wives to bake some bread, the whole of the inhabitants again flew to arms, and showered forth their arrows, stones, and darts upon our troops, wounding twelve men, and Cortes himself in the face. During this skirmish one of the canoes upset, by which part of the provisions was lost, and one Mexican killed.

There were such swarms of moschitoes along the banks of this river as to render it impossible for a person to live there; but Cortes bore everything with patience, and returned to Buena Vista, which had never before been so well supplied with provisions. The last township, where the inhabitants had attacked Cortes, was called Cinacan, and considered to be about 280 miles from Guatimala. In this expedition up the river our general had spent twenty-six days; but, notwithstanding the fertility of the soil, he did not consider it an eligible spot for a colony, as the population of the country was too small. He therefore wrote word to Sandoval that he would shortly march to Naco himself, but that he was first desirous of making a short expedition to Puerto de Caballos, for which purpose he would require ten of the veterans of Guacasualco, without whom it was impossible to undertake anything which required activity and perseverance.

CHAPTER CLXXXI.

How Cortes embarks, with the soldiers who accompanied him on this expedition, and with all the inhabitants of Buena Vista, for Puerto de Caballos, where he founds a colony, to which he gives the name of Natividad.

Our general, considering the spot where Avila had built the town of Buena Vista every way unfavorable for a colony, embarked, with the whole of the inhabitants, in two vessels and the brigantine, and set sail for the bay of Puerto de Caballos, where he arrived in the space of eight days. Finding that there was an excellent harbour in this bay, and having learnt from the Indians that there were numerous townships round about, he determined to found a colony in this place, to which he gave the name of Natividad, and appointed Diego de Godoy commandant of the town. He then made an excursion into the interior of the country to visit the several townships, but which, at the present day, are all destroyed. The inhabitants assured him that there

were several other townships in the neighbourhood, and that Naco itself was not far off. He well stocked the new town with provisions, and wrote word to Sandoval, whom he imagined had already reached Naco, to send him ten of the men of Guacasualco, without whom, he particularly remarked in his letter, no undertaking could well succeed. From this place, he added, it was his intention to repair to the bay of Honduras, in order to visit the new town of Truxillo; and concluded by saying he was to continue the conquest of the country, and to leave a settlement in some advantageous place. Sandoval received this letter in the township where we had first halted, for we had not yet broken up our quarters for Naco. At present, therefore, we will leave Cortes in Puerto de Caballos, where, as we understood, the inhabitants were so dreadfully tormented night and day by innumerable moschitoes that every comfort was destroyed.

On the receipt of Cortes' letter, Sandoval would gladly that instant have set out for Naco if he had not previously despatched a great part of his troops into the surrounding townships in search of provisions and fodder for our horses. He was therefore compelled to await the return of these troops, which, moreover, had been detained in passing a river, where they had left a small detachment to guard the canoe that had ferried them across. Besides this, Sandoval had had daily skirmishes with the Indians of the townships lying on the Golfo Dulce, so that he deemed it necessary to send a further reinforcement of eight men, under my command, as a further guard to the canoe. Here we were obliged to observe the utmost vigilance, for one night a great body of Indians fell suddenly upon us, in the hopes, if they found us off our guard, to capture the canoe and set fire to our huts. However silently they came creeping along, we received timely notice of their approach, and we eight men, with four Mexicans, boldly advanced against them, and quickly sent them back from whence they came, though two Spaniards and one of the Mexicans were slightly wounded by the enemy's arrows. Upon this three of us marched further on to some huts where several invalid Mexicans and Spaniards had remained behind. These people we conducted safely to Sandoval, with the exception of one Spaniard, who died of exhaustion a couple of miles from the township, where the former was quartered with the rest of the troops. This soldier was one of those who had but recently arrived from Spain, and we were obliged to leave his body on the road from want of sufficient hands to carry it.

When I had given Sandoval my report of everything that had befallen us on our march, he was excessively angry with us for not having

brought the dead body either on our shoulders or on one of the horses. I told him very coolly that each of the horses as it was had carried two sick persons, and that we ourselves had been obliged to walk on foot. One of my companions, however, a certain Villa Nueva, was not quite so cool as myself, but told Sandoval in a passion that we had trouble enough to drag ourselves along without loading ourselves with the dead, and as for himself he was perfectly tired of the many fatigues he had to undergo in the service of Cortes, and that all for nothing. Sandoval, however, persisted that we should turn back and bury the dead body. Villa Nueva and myself accordingly took two Mexicans and a spade with us, dug a deep hole, in which we put our deceased companion, and placed a cross on it. In one of his pockets we found a little gold, a number of dice, and a small scrap of paper containing an account of his birthplace, his parents, and of some property which he possessed in the island of Teneriffe. This document we subsequently forwarded to the latter place. May God have mercy on his soul: Amen.

We now marched further on to some townships, in the neighbourhood of which gold mines were discovered three years afterwards. From this place we came to Quinistan, and the following day in the forenoon we arrived at Naco, which at that time was a township of considerable magnitude, but there was not a single inhabitant to be seen, and we quartered ourselves in a large courtyard, where Christobal de Oli was beheaded. In some houses we were fortunate enough to find a good supply of maise, beans, and even some salt, of which latter we were in great want. In this place we quartered ourselves as comfortably as if we never meant to leave the spot again.

In Naco there was a well which contained the most delicious water I ever tasted in the New World. Here likewise stood a wide spreading tree, under the shade of which, even during the hottest part of the day, the air was so cool that our very hearts became refreshed and invigorated. From this tree there also continually fell a very delicate dew, which produced a most comfortable feeling to the head. The surrounding neighbourhood abounded in various kinds of provisions, and numerous small townships lay dispersed in all directions. But I will break off here, and reserve what I have further to relate for the next chapter.

CHAPTER CLXXXII.

Sandoval commences to subdue the province of Naco, and the opposition he meets with from the natives.

IMMEDIATELY upon our arrival at Naco we took possession of the storehouses, and then dispersed ourselves among the maise plantations, where we captured three of the chiefs of this township. Sandoval behaved in the kindest manner to these men, presented them with some Spanish toys, and begged of them to go and call the principal caziques, with whom he was anxious to live on friendly terms. These personages faithfully fulfilled their commission, and returned with two of the caziques, though they had not been able to persuade the inhabitants to return to their dwellings, who contented themselves by forwarding us from time to time a small supply of provisions. In this way matters continued for several days, and neither party thought of commencing hostilities.

The reader will remember that Cortes had written to Sandoval for ten of the veterans of Guacasualco, all of whom he had mentioned by name, and mine was put at the head of this list; but as I was very unwell at the time, I desired Sandoval to excuse me from leaving him on the present occasion, and to acquaint our general that I should not be able to accompany him, owing to the bad state of my health; which was really the fact. Sandoval accordingly allowed me to stay behind, and he despatched eight soldiers to Cortes, men who would face any danger; but on this occasion they showed so much reluctance to march out that they cursed Cortes' proposed expedition in the strongest terms: and certainly they were in some manner justified, for it was impossible to say whether the country whither they were going to march was friendly disposed or not.

Before these eight soldiers departed, Sandoval requested the caziques to despatch five distinguished personages to accompany them to Puerto de Caballos, declaring to the caziques at the same time that, if these Spaniards received the slightest annoyance on their journey, he would burn down their townships, and fall upon the inhabitants. He then ordered them to provide our men with the best of provisions on their route.

Cortes was just about embarking for Truxillo when the eight Spaniards marched into Puerto de Caballos. He was greatly rejoiced at their arrival, for he knew what excellent soldiers they were, and soon after set sail with his troops, leaving Diego de Godoy as commander-in-chief

of the new colony, consisting of forty persons belonging to Buena Vista, and of the passengers lately arrived from Cuba. Godoy had scarcely sufficient patience to wait until Cortes' vessel was out of sight before he marched out with those who were in tolerable good health to visit the neighbouring townships, two of which he obliged to submit to his arms; but as the Indians soon found that his men were in bad health, and daily dying away, they troubled themselves very little about him, and withheld their supplies of provisions. As the Spaniards themselves durst no longer leave the town in search of these, a real famine existed among them, which, in a short time, carried off half of the inhabitants, three of whom deserted the spot altogether and fled to Naco.

Here affairs likewise began to assume a different aspect; for when Sandoval found that the Indians obstinately refused to return to the township, he determined to adopt some stronger measures, and to compel them to reoccupy their dwellings. We therefore marched out and visited Girimonga, Aculaco, and three other townships, which all lay in the neighbourhood of Naco, and they submitted to the Spanish crown without offering any resistance. We were equally successful in Quizmitan and with the tribes which inhabited the mountains, who even came out to meet us in order to declare themselves vassals of our emperor. In this way we lived on terms of friendship with the inhabitants of the whole surrounding country; and as we demanded nothing of them, but only accepted of what they gave us of their own free choice, the inhabitants of Naco at length also reposed more confidence in us, and returned to their homes. In this peaceable condition the whole country continued until Cortes founded the town called Puerto de Caballos.

We must now see how matters stood in Truxillo.

CHAPTER CLXXXIII.

How Cortes disembarks in the harbour of Truxillo, and the inhabitants rejoice at his arrival.

Cortes had embarked at Puerto de Caballos with a considerable body of the best troops; and, after a favorable voyage of six days, he arrived in the harbour of Truxillo. The colonists there were excessively rejoiced on learning that Cortes himself was among the newly arrived. The whole of the inhabitants assembled on the beach to receive him and

to pay their homage to him; and as great part of the colony was composed of those who had been expelled from Panuco, and of those who had taken an ostensible part in the revolt of Christobal de Oli, their very first step was to beg forgiveness of Cortes for the past. This he granted them without any hesitation, discoursed with them in a most friendly manner, and in their company proceeded direct to church to make his devotions. The most comfortable mansion was prepared for him, and the chief inhabitants then detailed every circumstance respecting Francisco de las Casas' arrival, his capture, with that of Gonsalez de Avila, and the subsequent beheading of Christobal de Oli; how the two former officers had then departed for Mexico, but that they themselves had in the meantime subdued several of the townships of this province.

After our general had been apprized of everything that had taken place, he expressed his satisfaction, and confirmed the several authorities of the town in their respective offices, both civil and military, but appointed his cousin Saavedra captain-general of the whole country, which met with universal approbation. He then summoned the inhabitants of the whole surrounding neighbourhood to send him ambassadors, and to declare themselves vassals of our emperor, which they were not long in complying with when they understood that Malinche, the conqueror of Mexico, had arrived in person; and they brought at the same time a quantity of provisions for him.

As the caziques of the four principal townships happened to stand all together in the presence of Cortes, he took the opportunity of addressing them at some length, which was interpreted to them by Doña Marina. He first spoke to them about our holy religion, and then of our great emperor Don Carlos of Austria, who had dominion over so many countries and nations; how his majesty had sent us expressly into these countries in order to abolish from among them all idolatry, theft, the sacrificing of human beings, the eating of human flesh, and other abominations; also to accustom them to live in peace and harmony with each other. It was therefore their duty, he added, to subject themselves to a monarch who was so mercifully inclined, and to lend us every assistance in their power; but, on the other hand, he should be compelled to punish those severely who in any way broke the peace.

After this, father Juan de las Varillas and the two Franciscan monks preached an edifying sermon to them, which two Mexicans, who understood the Spanish language, and other persons, interpreted to the caziques, who listened with great attention to all that was said, and readily acknowledged themselves vassals of our emperor, and promised

to obey Malinche in everything. Our general then ordered them to furnish the colony with provisions, and to send a number of Indians with the necessary tools to level a rising ground which lay in the town and obstructed the view of the harbour and of the sea. He also desired them to repair with their canoes to some townships of the Guanajas islands to request the inhabitants there to supply him with fish, which they had in abundance. The inhabitants of these islands readily complied, and brought a present consisting in fowls and fish, Cortes, in return, giving them some of the swine he had taken with him on this expedition; for he had been assured by a Spaniard that these islands were peculiarly adapted for breeding pigs, provided the animals were allowed to go at large. This indeed was found to be a fact; for, a couple of years after, they had so increased that people went thither regularly to hunt them.

But all this is rather foreign to my narrative, and I will rather acquaint the reader that the caziques sent so large a body of Indians to level the hill, that, in the space of two days, there was a good prospect of the sea from the town. They likewise constructed fifteen houses, of which one for Cortes was of larger dimensions. As there were still a great number of townships which refused obedience, Cortes desired the caziques of Papayeca, which, at that time, was a very extensive township, to enumerate the several tribes which had omitted to send ambassadors. The whole of them, he was informed, dwelt among the mountains, and had equipped themselves for war. Our general then despatched thither Saavedra, with a strong detachment of troops, among whom were also the eight soldiers of Guacasualco, to compel these Indians to sue for peace. Most of these townships, on the approach of our troops, very wisely submitted without offering any resistance; but there were three which obstinately refused to do so, and, if I am not mistaken, are called the Acaltecas, against which Saavedra immediately marched his men. Cortes' name was so feared and respected among all the inhabitants of this country that even the distant tribes of Olancho, where subsequently so many lucrative mines were discovered, sent ambassadors to him to declare themselves vassals of our emperor. Throughout this country Cortes was known by the name of the captain Hue, Hue of Marina, which means the old captain who has Marina with him.

During our general's stay in Truxillo, his cousin Avalos, the two Franciscan monks, the licentiate Pedro Lopez, the officers of his household, Carranza and Guinea, Juan Tlamena and several of the men he had brought with him, besides many of the colonists, were all suffering

from bad health. Cortes, therefore, determined to send the whole of them, as soon as the weather was favorable, either to Cuba or to St. Domingo. For this purpose he fitted out a vessel and sent on board the best provisions that were to be had, and likewise took this opportunity of forwarding despatches to the Hieronymite brotherhood, in which he gave them a full account of the hazardous expedition to the coast of the Honduras, and of the arrangements he had made in Mexico for the government of New Spain, during his absence. He likewise mentioned every circumstance from the day he had despatched Oli with an armament to the Honduras, down to the tragical death of the latter; and concluded by giving an account of the country and of the rich gold mines it possessed.

In order that these passengers, on arriving at Cuba, might have sufficient credit there, he gave them a number of valuable jewels out of his private treasure, besides several pieces of his golden dinner service. As chief in command of this vessel, he appointed his cousin Avalos, whom he desired to touch at the island of Cozumel, and to carry away prisoners from thence twenty-five soldiers, who had been left there by some officer to levy contributions upon the inhabitants.

The vessel set sail with a favorable wind, and had alternately good and bad weather. She had already doubled the cape of Sant Antonio, and had arrived within seventy leagues of the Havannah, when a heavy storm arose, in which she was wrecked off the coast. The Franciscan monks, the captain Avalos, and a great number of others met with a watery grave; only a few, by great exertions, saved themselves in the boat, and others drifted on shore by clinging to pieces of wood.

The persons who thus luckily escaped soon spread the news through the island of Cuba that Cortes, with his whole army, was still in existence. The licentiate Pedro Lopez, who had also escaped destruction, hastened to St. Domingo, and there related to the royal court of audience every circumstance relative to Cortes' expedition to the Honduras, and how he was then staying at Truxillo occupied in subduing the surrounding country. He likewise stated that the troops were in great want of provisions, wine, and horses; that he had despatched a vessel with a quantity of gold to Cuba, in order to purchase these necessaries, but which was unfortunately wrecked off the coast of the latter island, and he himself had narrowly escaped destruction.

The news of Cortes being still alive and well spread universal joy, for it was generally believed that he, with the whole of his troops, had perished in the expedition to the Honduras. From Hispaniola the glad tidings also reached New Spain, where Cortes' death had also

been currently reported. In St. Domingo the spirit of speculation was soon stirred up and two vessels were quickly despatched to Truxillo, with horses, shirts, military caps, and Spanish toys, to all of which these speculating merchants unfortunately forgot to add provisions, and only sent one pipe of wine.

Cortes himself had remained at Truxillo, where his time was fully occupied in making various regulations. While he was staying here several of the inhabitants of the Guanajas islands came and complained to him about a vessel which lay at anchor in front of their township. This vessel, they said, had a great number of Spaniards on board, all armed with matchlocks and crossbows, and they were intent upon carrying off the inhabitants into slavery. To all appearances, added they, these Spaniards were pirates, and the same who had visited their country some years previously in a similar manner, and forcibly dragged away a considerable number of their countrymen.

Upon this information, Cortes hastily fitted out one of the brigantines with the largest piece of ordnance, and sent twenty men on board, under the command of one of his best officers, who was ordered, at all events, to bring the strange vessel, with all her hands, into the harbour of Truxillo. The Indians likewise promised to man all their canoes and accompany the brigantine to where the vessel lay moored.

When the strange vessel observed a well-armed brigantine approaching, with several canoes belonging to these islands, she easily guessed how matters stood, quickly weighed anchor, made off at the utmost of her speed, and so eluded the pursuit of the brigantine. We subsequently learnt that this vessel was commanded by the bachelor Moreno, whom the royal court of audience at St. Domingo had despatched on certain business to Nombre de Dios, and he had either been driven by contrary winds off these islands, or had purposely repaired thither to carry away a cargo of slaves.

CHAPTER CLXXXIV.

How Sandoval, during our stay at Naco, takes forty Spanish soldiers with their captain prisoners, who, on their march from the province of Nicaragua, had everywhere plundered and otherwise ill used the inhabitants.

While Sandoval was staying at Naco, occupied in the friendly subjection of the surrounding country, four caziques arrived in our camp

from the two townships of Quecuscapa and Tanchinalchapa, complaining bitterly of some Spaniards, who, they said, had horses, and were otherwise armed like ourselves. These men plundered the inhabitants of all their property, and forcibly carried off their wives and daughters in iron chains.

Sandoval, it may be imagined, was exceedingly vexed at this intelligence. On inquiring of the caziques how far distant their townships lay, they told him only one day's journey. He then immediately marched out with sixty of us, all well armed, and we arrived in the above-mentioned townships before the Spaniards there had the least notice of our approach; yet the instant they saw us they flew to their arms, but we came so suddenly upon them, that we took the greater part of the men with their captain prisoners, without so much as a drop of blood being spilt on either side. Sandoval, to use a common phrase, blew them up in fine style, and asked them whether theirs was justifiable conduct thus to ill use his majesty's subjects, and whether the course they pursued was the proper method of making conquests in his majesty's name? He then commanded the men and women they had taken prisoners, and around whose necks they had fastened iron collars, to be instantly released and restored to the caziques of the district.

We then marched back to Naco, carrying along with us our Spanish prisoners and their captain, whose name was Pedro de Garro. Almost the whole of these men had horses, and were followed by numbers of female Indians of Nicaragua, some of whom were uncommonly handsome; besides a great many female slaves to attend upon them. We others, who had suffered so many hardships in this expedition, had none of these comforts, and, in comparison with our miserable appearance, these Spaniards looked like so many wealthy noblemen. When we arrived in Naco, Cortes quartered each of them according to his respective rank and station, as there were several men of distinction and quality among them.

When these men found that we formed part of Cortes' troops, their captain, Garro, did all in his power to ingratiate himself in Sandoval's and our favour, and the whole of them declared they were delighted to be with us. Respecting their arrival in this neighbourhood, they gave the following explanation.

Pedro Arias de Avila was governor of Terra Firma, and had sent out Francisco Hernandez, one of his most distinguished officers, with a considerable body of foot and horse, in order to make conquests in the provinces of Nicaragua and Leon, which he subdued and colonized.

Hernandez, finding that everything went on so successfully, and thinking himself sufficiently far removed from Pedro Arias de Avila, to do what he liked, listened to evil counsellors, and came to some secret understanding with the bachelor Moreno, above mentioned, who had been despatched, by the royal court of audience at St. Domingo, to Terra Firma, to make inquiries into the death of Balboa, whom Arias de Avila had most unjustly beheaded, after giving him his daughter in marriage. This Moreno hinted to Hernandez, that it would not amount to treachery if he strove to gain for himself the government of the countries he should subdue, which would be the more easily obtained, since Pedro Arias had acted so wickedly against Balboa, who had had the best claim to be appointed adelantado of these countries, and indeed the first of the two who memorialised his majesty to that effect. Francisco Hernandez lent a willing ear to this advice, and began by despatching his chief officer Pedro de Garro to the northern provinces, in search of some harbour where he might found a colony, and send his majesty thence an account of the countries he had subdued and colonized; and he doubted not but that his endeavours would be crowned with success, since the provinces of which he should petition to be the governor lay so far distant from Terra Firma.

Respecting these matters, Sandoval and Garro had several secret conferences with each other, which terminated in the former writing on the subject to Cortes, at Truxillo, to induce him to confer on Hernandez the government of Nicaragua. For this purpose he despatched five of our men, and an equal number of Garro's troops, along the coast, to Truxillo, in order to convey his letters to Cortes. These men took with them twenty of Garro's Indians, in order to assist them in crossing the rivers. Their march, however, was attended with very little success, for they could neither pass the river Pichin nor the river Balama, both of which were greatly swollen, so that they returned to Naco, after a fortnight's absence. Sandoval was excessively annoyed at this circumstance, and spoke in very severe terms to the person who had the command of this small detachment. He then ordered captain Luis Marin, with ten of us, and five of Garro's men, immediately to set out for Truxillo, and to march thither in a direct line through the country. I was likewise desired to accompany Luis Marin, and we all set out on foot. We passed through a number of hostile townships, though, if I were to relate all the battles we fought with the natives; the difficulties we had to encounter on this journey; the rivers and estuaries we had to cross, sometimes by means of swimming, sometimes in canoes; the hunger we sustained for several days, I should not finish so easily.

There were days in which we crossed, either in canoes or by swimming, three rapid streams. On approaching nearer to the coast, we had to pass arms of the sea which abounded with alligators, and when we arrived at the river Xaqua, which lay forty miles from Triunfo de la Cruz, it took us two whole days before we reached the opposite shore, in canoes. Here we saw the remains of seven horses which had belonged to Oli's troops. At length we arrived in Triunfo de la Cruz, where we found nothing but the wood of some vessels which had been wrecked. We then marched on for another four days, and came to the township of Guemara, where the inhabitants rose up in arms against us. These Indians were armed with long heavy lances, which they use in the same way we do ours, covering their bodies at the same time with a shield, which is fastened to the left arm. They came out against us in a large body, and we were obliged to fight foot to foot with them; though, after a short conflict, we cut our way through their crowded ranks, with only two of our men wounded. Their reason for attacking us was, because they thought we did not belong to Cortes' troops, but to a body of adventurers, who had on a former occasion committed depredations among them.

Two days' further march brought us into the neighbourhood of Truxillo. It was about the hour of vespers, and we speedily came in sight of five persons, who were strolling along the shore on horseback, one of whom was our general himself, who soon recognized us at a distance, gave spur to his horse, and galloped up to us. He instantly dismounted, embraced us, with the tears flowing from his eyes, and cried out: "O, my companions and brothers, how I have longed to see you, and to receive some intelligence of you!"

Cortes looked exceedingly ill, and we felt sorely grieved to see him thus. He had been suffering from a violent fever, which had nearly proved fatal to him, and he felt the more downcast, as he had not received any intelligence whatsoever as to how matters stood in Mexico. Some of our men even assured me he had been so nigh his death, that the Franciscan gown, in which he was to have been buried, had been got in readiness.

After the first welcomes were past, Cortes accompanied us on foot to Truxillo, where we were immediately shown to our quarters, and then invited to sup with our general; but it was a very poor set out, for there was not even cassave bread to be had. The letter we brought from Sandoval he read to us at table, and he declared his willingness to do all in his power for Francisco Hernandez.

Three days previously, as I mentioned above, the two small vessels

from St. Domingo ran into the harbour of Truxillo, but had unfortunately brought nothing in the shape of provisions, excepting a pipe of wine. It would, however, have been much better for us if these vessels had never arrived, for the whole of us got greatly into debt, by purchasing various articles of wearing apparel, and Spanish gewgaws.

We were still in conversation with Cortes, when some one came running in with the information that another vessel was making full sail for the harbour. This vessel came direct from the Havannah, and had been despatched hither by the licentiate Zuazo, whom Cortes had appointed alcalde-mayor of Mexico. Zuazo sent our general some refreshments by this vessel, and a letter, the important contents of which I will give as nearly as possible in the next chapter.

CHAPTER CLXXXV.

How Cortes receives a letter from the licentiate Zuazo out of the Havannah, and of its contents.

After this vessel had cast anchor, the captain, who was a person of quality, stepped on shore, announced his arrival to Cortes, and handed over to him a letter from the licentiate Zuazo. The grief which this letter occasioned our general was so excessive, that he was heard to sob aloud in his apartment, nor did he show himself again until the next morning, which was a Sunday. The night previous he confessed to father Juan, and had desired that the mass might be performed very early in the morning, and he then made the communion. After mass had been said, he ordered us all into his presence, and communicated to us the news he had received with regard to the affairs of New Spain.

To begin, we now learnt, that on the bare rumour of our having perished on the expedition to the Honduras, our property had been seized, and sold to the highest bidder; and our Indians distributed among people who were least deserving of them.

Upon this followed the intelligence which had been received from Diego de Ordas, and our general's father, Martin Cortes, respecting the slanderous letters which the accountant Albornoz had despatched to his majesty against Cortes; and the commands which the emperor had, in consequence, issued to the admiral of St. Domingo; and how the duke of Bejar had, for a time, dispersed the storm which was thickening over our general's head. Those two gentlemen at the same time mentioned that the captain Narvaez had been empowered by his majesty to

subdue the countries lying on the river Palmas; that a certain Nuño de Guzman was appointed governor of the province of Panuco; and that Cortes' great enemy, the bishop of Burgos, was dead.

With respect to the affairs of New Spain, they were in a most dreadful state of confusion. As soon as the factor Gonsalo Salazar and the veedor Pedro Almindez Chirinos arrived in Mexico from Guacasualco, with their credentials, by virtue of which they were empowered to take the government of New Spain into their own hands if they observed that the treasurer Alonso de Estrada and the accountant Albornoz began to govern badly, they allied themselves with the licentiate Zuazo, alcalde mayor of Mexico, Rodrigo de Paz, alguacil mayor, Andreas de Tapia, Jorge de Alvarado, and the whole of the veteran Conquistadores then staying in that city. When they thought their party was sufficiently numerous, they came forth with their commissions, and maintained that they alone were the real governors, and that neither the treasurer nor accountant ought to have any share in it whatever. This created terrible factions in the city, which ended in a regular battle, and many were killed on both sides.

The factor and the veedor, in the end, gained the upper hand, and cast their two opponents, with several of their adherents, into prison. But the opposite party was not put down by this, and not a day passed without a conflict between the two, while the inhabitants became continually more embittered against the new governors, who distributed the Indians among their creatures and other worthless fellows. Nor was it long before the triumphant party fell out among themselves. The licentiate Zuazo was obstructed, in every way, in the exercise of his office, and Rodrigo de Paz was even thrown into prison for siding with him. The latter had done all in his power to bring about a reconciliation between the four claimants to the governorship, in which he had fortunately succeeded; but this harmony was of no longer duration than eight days, when hostilities again burst out between them.

About this time, also, the provinces of the Zapotecs and Minxes, besides the extensive and well-fortified township of Coatlan, again revolted, and the veedor Chirinos marched against them in person, at the head of some Spanish soldiers, all of whom had but recently arrived from Spain, and were, consequently, little accustomed to Indian warfare. This campaign put the royal treasury to vast expense, although nothing but debauchery and gambling went on in the camp; while the veedor put the money into his own pocket which he ought to have given the Indians, in exchange for their provisions. The inhabitants of Coatlan, finding the Spaniards little upon their guard, fell suddenly

upon their encampment one night, killed a number of the men, and wounded a great many more. The factor, upon this, despatched one of Cortes' officers, Andreas de Monjaraz, who was a close adherent of his, to the assistance of his associate in office; but Monjaraz's aid was of very little use, as he was suffering severely from virulent swellings in his groins, so that he was scarcely able to move about. The Indians were each time victorious, and it was greatly feared the Mexicans themselves would rise up in arms. Notwithstanding all these unfavorable circumstances, the factor was very diligent in accomplishing his main object, which was, to forward his majesty, and the comendador-mayor of Leon, Don Francisco de las Cobas, as much gold as he could possibly scrape together, to gain their good wishes, particularly as about that time the rumour was fast spreading that Cortes and the whole of us had been cut off by the Indians in a township called Xicalango.

During these troubles, Diego de Ordas, whom Cortes had despatched to Spain, returned to Mexico, and had been, as I have above related, highly honoured by his majesty. When he saw the party-spirit which was raging, and that a total anarchy must soon follow, he united himself closely to the factor, and declared that he would repair in person to the coast of Honduras, to gain some certain information with regard to the fate of Cortes. He actually fitted out a large vessel and a brigantine, and sailed along the coast until he arrived at Xicalango, where, as I have mentioned in a former chapter, Simon de Cuenca and Francisco de Medina perished, with all their men. The accounts which Ordas could gather here went to confirm all that had been rumoured respecting our total destruction. He therefore returned to New Spain, and wrote word to the factor, without going on shore, that there was now no doubt of Cortes having perished, with all who accompanied him on the expedition. After despatching this letter to Mexico, he immediately set sail for Cuba, in order to purchase cows and horses there.

The factor, on receiving this intelligence from de Ordas, made it known to every one, and subsequently the whole of Cortes' old soldiers and friends put on mourning, and even a tomb was erected to his memory in the chief church of Mexico. The factor then, under sound of trumpet and drum, had himself proclaimed governor and captain-general of New Spain. His next step was, to order the wives of those who were supposed to have perished with Cortes to pray for their late husbands' souls, and to form new marriages, all of which was likewise made known in Guacasualco and other townships. He even went so far as to order the wife of a certain Alonso Valiente to be publicly scourged for a witch through the streets of Mexico, for having declared

her determination not to marry again, as she was sure that Cortes and the whole of us were still alive, and that we should shortly make our appearance, for we, the veteran Conquistadores, said she, were a very different kind of soldiers to those who marched out under the veedor to Coatlan, against whom the Indians made war, not they against the Indians. The veedor was soon surrounded by a vile set of flatterers, who supported him in all his measures; and one Spaniard, whom we had always considered to be a man of honour, but whose name I will refrain from mentioning, had the shamelessness to assure the factor, in presence of several persons, that as he was one night passing over the Tlatelulco, near the church of Santiago, where the great temple of Huitzilopochtli once stood, he had seen the souls of Cortes, Doña Marina, and Sandoval burning in livid flames in a court-yard near this church. This had frightened him to such a degree, he added, that he fell ill in consequence.

There was also another Spaniard, whose name I will suppress, because we had always greatly esteemed him, who related a similar circumstance, telling the factor that evil spirits were seen flitting up and down the great squares of Tezcuco, which the Indians said, were the departed souls of Cortes and Doña Marina. But all these were of course infamous lies, merely invented to flatter the factor, or most likely he had promulgated them himself.

About this time Francisco de Las Casas and Gil Gonsalez de Avila arrived in Mexico, the officers who, we saw in a former chapter, ordered Christobal de Oli to be decapitated at Naco. Las Casas, seeing the disordered state of the government, and that the factor had proclaimed himself governor of New Spain, publicly declared that the conduct which had been pursued was bad, and that nothing of all this ought to have been permitted, as Cortes was still alive. But even if he had perished, which God forbid, the government ought to have devolved upon a person of higher rank than the factor, a cavalier of distinction and merit; for instance, on Pedro de Alvarado, whom, he maintained, ought to be called to take the government into his hands. The latter's brother, indeed, and even the treasurer, besides several other of the inhabitants of Mexico, actually wrote to that officer, requesting him to march, without delay, to this town, at the head of as large a body of troops as he could possibly get together, and they would assist him in getting him proclaimed governor, until some certainty was obtained respecting the fate of Cortes, and his majesty's pleasure was known as to whom his successor should be. In consequence of this letter, Alvarado set out on his march to Mexico, but on the road he changed

his mind and returned to his province, when he heard that the factor threatened to put him to death, and had already hung Rodrigo de Paz, and cast the licentiate Zuazo into prison.

The factor had, shortly beforehand, scraped together as much gold as he possibly could, which he intended forwarding, with secret despatches, to his majesty in Spain, through his most confidential friend, a certain Pennas. This was opposed by Las Casas, the licentiate Zuazo, Rodrigo de Paz, the treasurer, and the accountant, who maintained that it was wrong to announce Cortes' death to his majesty before they had gained some certainty as to his fate; but they had no objection to forward the emperor all the gold arising from the royal fifths; only this should be done in common, and with the consent of the treasurer and of the accountant, and not in the factor's name alone. As this gold was put on board a vessel which was about to set sail for Spain, Las Casas, by authority of the alcalde mayor Zuazo, and in understanding with Rodrigo de Paz and the other crown officers, repaired to the sea coast, in order to detain the vessel until they should all have drawn up a faithful account of the state of affairs in New Spain, and to despatch it to his majesty by this same opportunity. As it was of the first importance to the factor to prevent this if he wished to further his own ends, he ordered Las Casas and the licentiate Zuazo to be imprisoned. He then instituted a criminal suit against Las Casas and Gonsalez de Avila for the execution of Christobal de Oli, when both were found guilty, and sentenced to decapitation, which was very nigh being put into execution; but they succeeded, by the utmost of their exertions, in obtaining an appeal to his majesty. The factor, consequently, sent them prisoners to Spain, and, to rid himself of Zuazo, he sent him on a mule to Vera Cruz, where he ordered him to be put on board a vessel bound for Cuba, which the factor maintained was his proper place of abode, as he had previously filled the office of judge in that island. But the unfortunate Rodrigo de Paz fared worse than all; him he cast into irons, and wished to extort from him where Cortes' gold and silver lay hid, which he must know, as he was the latter's major-domo. This treasure, he said, he was desirous of forwarding to his majesty, whom Cortes had secretly robbed of it; but as Rodrigo de Paz (against all probability however) declared he knew nothing of any such treasure, the factor put him to the torture by pouring boiling oil over the soles of his feet; and after he had exhausted his strength by this, as well as by keeping him in close confinement, he at length hung him for a rebel, in order to put it out of his power of ever bringing any accusations against him for so much ill treatment. The factor at

the same time issued orders for the apprehension of the greater part of the soldiers and inhabitants of Mexico who had remained true to Cortes. These persons, seeing the storm that was brooding over them, retired with Jorge de Alvarado and Andreas de Tapia into the cloister of the Franciscans, as their party was too weak to bid defiance to the factor, and most of the veteran Conquistadores were with Cortes in the Honduras, and a great number had closely allied themselves to the factor, who had gained them over to his side by bestowing lucrative commendaries on them. But as the factor still feared the inhabitants of Mexico might each moment rise up in arms against him, and a desperate conflict ensue, he ordered all the arms to be taken out of the arsenal, and had them brought into his palace, in front of which he mounted all the cannon of the fortress, and those which served for the protection of the harbour. The chief command of this park of artillery he gave to Don Luis de Guzman, a relative of the duke of Medina Sidonia. In the same way he formed a body guard, in which were found the names of Gines Nortes, Pedro Gonsalez Sabiotc, and others of Cortes' soldiers. A certain Artiaga he appointed captain of this guard.

Zuazo advised our general to use the utmost circumspection, in case he should repair in person to New Spain, as other things had happened even of a worse nature; for instance, the factor had written to acquaint his majesty that a stamp had been found in Cortes' bureau, with which he was accustomed to mark the gold that was secretly brought to him by the Indians, thereby to avoid paying the royal fifth.

In order that Cortes might form some notion as to how matters stood in Mexico, he (Zuazo) would give him the following instance: One of the Spanish inhabitants of Guacasualco had come to Mexico, to apply for some property, which had become vacant by the death of one of the settlers there. In Mexico he happened to lodge with a Spanish woman, who had married a second time, on the supposition that her former husband had perished with Cortes; he reproached her for having married again, and assured her that Cortes and the whole of us were still alive. All this was reported to the factor, who instantly despatched four alguacils to bind him hand and foot, in which way he was dragged to prison. He would even have hung him for creating sedition, but the poor fellow, whose name was Gonsalo Hernandez, swore that he had only said it to console the woman, for she still bitterly mourned the loss of her husband. He further said, that he was quite sure we were all cut off to a man by the Indians, for he had received positive information of it. This confession of Hernandez made all right again; he obtained the property for which he

had petitioned, but was ordered to quit Mexico forthwith, and assured that, if he ever again mentioned a word about Cortes being alive, he would, undoubtedly, be put to death.

Zuazo also communicated the mournful death of the excellent father Olmedo, who died shortly after Cortes' departure from Mexico; the whole of the inhabitants of which city had shed tears for the loss of this holy man. He was buried in the church of Santiago, and the Indians fasted from the day of his decease up to the moment of his funeral. The Franciscan monks held a beautiful funeral oration over his body, in which they enumerated all his great virtues, and said that the emperor was as much indebted to him as to us, the veteran Conquistadores, for the conquest of New Spain; but the still greater praise was due to him for giving the Indians a knowledge of God, and for having opened to them the gates of heaven. They knew, these Franciscans said, that he alone had baptized above 2500 Indians; that the good he had done by his advice and kindness was endless; and that he had been a father to the poor. In short, concluded Zuazo, all is lost in Mexico; and thus matters stood, when I was thrown on the back of a mule, and sent in chains to the place whence I date my letter.

When Cortes had finished reading this letter to us, our grief and vexation were without bounds; nor did we spare our abuse of him who, in addition to the many hardships and fatigues we suffered, had also brought this calamity upon us. We vented a thousand curses upon Cortes, as well as upon the factor, and every one expressed his sentiments aloud, without any reserve. But Cortes himself could not refrain from shedding tears. He again shut himself up for half a day with the letter, and would not allow any one to come near him. When he made his reappearance, we unanimously proposed to him immediately to embark with the three vessels which lay in the harbour for New Spain. To this he replied, in the most affectionate manner, as follows: "O! my sons and companions, with so worthless a character as the factor a person must be particularly on his guard. This man has at present the government in his own hands, and is villain enough, if he should get us into his power, to put us all to death. Wherefore I intend, with God's assistance, to embark with no more than four or five of you gentlemen, and to land in some harbour where my arrival will not be immediately known in Mexico; not, until we are enabled to march with a considerable force into this metropolis: besides which, Sandoval is with too small a body of troops in Naco for you all to leave him; wherefore you, Luis Marin, must again join him with your small de-

tachment, and desire him to commence his march as speedily as possible through the province of Guatimala to Mexico."

Our general then wrote to the captain Francisco Hernandez, who was staying at Nicaragua, offering to promote his interests to the utmost of his power, and sent him two mules laden with horseshoes, of which he knew he was in great want; a quantity of agricultural implements, several splendid articles of dress, and four pieces of beautiful plate, besides several golden ornaments. With these things a certain Cabrera, one of the five men of Garro's troops, who had accompanied us to Truxillo, was despatched to the camp of Hernandez. This Cabrera was a hidalgo by birth, and a native of Old Castile, an officer of great courage and muscular power, who subsequently gained so much renown as captain under Benalcazar. He became quartermaster-general of Blasco Nuñez Vela, and fell in the same battle with the viceroy.

When I found that Cortes was determined to proceed to New Spain by water, I earnestly begged he would allow me to accompany him, and desired him to remember that, in all the dangers he had undergone, and in the battles he had fought, I never had flinched from his side; how faithfully I had always cooperated with him to accomplish his objects; and that now he had an opportunity of showing me he valued the services I had rendered to him. When I had done speaking, Cortes gave me a hearty embrace, and said, "If I take you along with me, my son, who will be with Sandoval? I therefore beg of you to remain with your friend, and I swear to you by my beard that I will reward you for it, and believe me I shall never forget the services you have rendered me." In short, all I might say was to no purpose; he would not allow me to accompany him.

While we were still lying in Truxillo, a cavalier, named Rodrigo Mannueca, wished by some means or other to enliven Cortes, who was exceedingly downcast, and certainly required something to rouse his spirits; for which purpose he, with several other cavaliers, clambered suddenly, in full armour, to the top of a house, which the Indians had recently built; but this bit of fun terminated fatally for Mannueca. The house stood upon a hill of considerable height, and poor Mannueca fell through the roof, broke his ribs, and died shortly after of the consequences.

Another circumstance likewise caused our general much grief, which was, that several of the cavaliers of the town, being dissatisfied with the appointments he had given them, boldly refused to obey him, and he could only succeed in quieting them by promising that they should

accompany him to Mexico, when he would bestow honorable appointments on them all.

He then desired Diego de Godoy, whom he had appointed commandant of Puerto de Caballos, to repair to Naco with those of the inhabitants, who were suffering from ill health, and unable to live any longer in the former place, on account of the innumerable swarms of moschitoes and flies. The rest of us, under command of Luis Marin, were to take our route overland to Mexico, and, if possible, to march through the province of Nicaragua, the government of which our general meant to petition his majesty to join to that of New Spain.

We then took leave of Cortes, just as he was about embarking for Mexico, and we marched in a direct line for Naco, in the best spirits, because we were now on our return to New Spain. After suffering a great deal of fatigue and hunger, we arrived safely in Naco, to the great joy of Sandoval. Pedro de Garro had already left, with the whole of his men for Nicaragua, to inform his captain, Francisco Hernandez, of the arrangements he had made with Sandoval; neither did we lose a moment's time, but broke up our quarters for Mexico the morning after we arrived in Naco.

I will not tire the reader by relating to him what happened to us on this long march, but rather acquaint him with the unfortunate end of Francisco Hernandez.

CHAPTER CLXXXVI.

How Pedro Arias de Avila is apprized by two of his confidants that Francisco Hernandez was in close correspondence with Cortes, and about to declare his independence of him; the steps which Arias took upon this.

AMONG the troops under Francisco Hernandez there were two soldiers, named Garavita and Zamorano, who were close adherents to Pedro Arias, the governor of Terra Firma. When these men saw the presents which Cortes had sent to Hernandez, and observed how the latter held secret conferences with Garro and other of his officers, they suspected that Hernandez designed giving Cortes possession of the province of Nicaragua. They consequently hastened off to communicate their suspicions to Arias. Garavita, in particular, evinced a considerable degree of zeal in this matter, for he had an old spite against our general; namely, when they were both young men, and living at St. Domingo,

they came to blows about some woman, and Garavita came off worst, with a thorough good drubbing.

On receiving this information, Arias marched out in person, at the head of a large body of troops, and soon arrived in Nicaragua, where he instantly seized Hernandez. Pedro de Garro had been wise enough not to await his arrival, and sought refuge in our camp. The former had had sufficient time to have done the same, but, unfortunately for him, he put his trust in the previous friendship which existed between himself and Pedro Arias, and felt quite confident the latter would behave leniently towards him. Arias, however, paid no respect to former friendship, but immediately put him upon his trial, and as it was proved that he intended to declare his independence of his commander-in-chief, Arias sentenced him to decapitation, which was put into execution in the town which he had himself founded shortly beforehand. This was all the unfortunate Hernandez gained by the treaty of Pedro Garro with Cortes, and the fine presents which the latter had sent him!

CHAPTER CLXXXVII.

How Cortes, after setting sail, was twice obliged to put back into the harbour of Truxillo; and what further happened.

Cortes, after setting sail from Truxillo two several times, was again obliged to put back into the harbour; the first time on account of a tremendous storm which arose, and the second time on account of the foremast snapping in two. As our general was suffering both bodily and mentally, and had been severely attacked by sea-sickness, he determined to postpone his voyage to Mexico to a more favorable season of the year; which he felt the more inclined to do, as he feared the factor might seize his person, and throw him into prison. After he had put back for the second time into Truxillo, he desired father Juan, who had set sail with him, to perform the mass of the Holy Ghost, to make a solemn procession, and to supplicate the Almighty, and the Holy Mary our Lady the Virgin, to enlighten his understanding, and lead him in that path by which he could exert himself most in the holy service of God. By this means, it appears, he was enlightened by the Holy Spirit not to leave this province at present, but to continue its colonization. He then despatched three couriers to us in all haste, with orders for us to discontinue our march to Mexico,

and to proceed with the further conquest of the country, as his guardian angel, he said, had pointed out this course to him.

When these commands were made known to us, we were ready to burst with rage; we poured out a thousand maledictions upon the man who seemed entirely deserted by his previous good fortune, and who was now working out our total ruin. We boldly told Sandoval to his face he might remain in this country if he liked, but we were determined not to be completely ruined, and would continue our march to Mexico. Sandoval acknowledged that we were in the right, and said he would only request of us to halt until he had informed Cortes of the resolution we had come to, and we had received his answer in return.

We then drew up a letter, which was signed by every one of us, and we despatched it to our general by the same couriers who had brought us his commands. His answer speedily arrived, in which vast promises were made to all those who would consent to remain in this country for the present; but at the very top of the letter was put: "I have only to tell those who do not choose to obey my commands, that there are plenty of soldiers in Spain."

When we received this answer, we were determined to give ourselves no further trouble about him, and forthwith to continue our march to Mexico; but Sandoval entreated us so earnestly, and with so much kindness, to have patience for a few days longer, as he would repair in person to Truxillo, to persuade Cortes to embark, that we consented to write an answer to his last letter, in which we requested him to take our present position into his consideration, and to remember that all our misfortunes were owing to this expedition. It was in supporting his cause, we said, that our possessions had been sold by public auction, and our Indians given away to other persons. Those among us who had left wives and children in New Spain were up to this time without any tidings of them. We therefore urgently begged of him to embark for Mexico without delay. With respect to the taunt which he threw out against us, of there being plenty of soldiers in Spain, we, in our turn, could remind him that there were also numbers of governors and celebrated captains in Mexico at present, who would be too happy to receive us, and to return our Indians to us; wherefore we were not exactly dependent on his kind considerations.

With this letter Sandoval set out for Truxillo, accompanied by Pedro de Sauzedo the snub-nose, and Francisco Donaire the blacksmith. When Sandoval was mounting his motilla, he made a solemn oath that he would do all in his power to persuade Cortes to embark for Mexico.

Since I have mentioned Sandoval's motilla, I may as well take the opportunity of saying a few words of this splendid horse. This animal was remarkably well trained for the field of battle, was of a dark chesnut colour, and so exquisitely beautiful in its proportions, that there was nothing to equal it in New Spain. The fame of this horse was so great, that it even reached the ears of the emperor, which induced Sandoval to present it to his majesty. While I am speaking about horses, I remember that Sandoval once offered to exchange one of his horses for mine, which was likewise a powerful and well-trained animal; indeed I had paid Avalos, the brother of Saavedra, 600 pesos for it, after I had lost a former one in our attack upon the township of Zulaco, for which I had paid a similar sum. I took Sandoval's offer, and we made an exchange; but I had scarcely done so, when it was killed in an engagement. I had now only a miserable young colt left, which I purchased from the merchants who had put into Truxillo with the two vessels above mentioned.

Sandoval, before his departure, addressed us in the most affectionate terms, and appointed Luis Marin chief in command during his absence. We quartered ourselves in the Marayani townships, and afterwards in the large township of Acalteca, where we were to await Sandoval's return. When Cortes had read our letter, he appeared greatly perplexed, particularly as he had sent out all his troops under his cousin Saavedra against the Indians, who had risen up in arms, and refused all further obedience to him. Sandoval, with Pedro Sauzedo, and father Juan, who likewise longed to return to Mexico, might say what they liked; it was all to no purpose; our general obstinately refused to embark.

CHAPTER CLXXXVIII.

How Cortes despatches one of his servants, named Martin de Orantes to Mexico, with letters to Francisco de Las Casas and Pedro de Alvarado, in which he empowers them to take upon themselves the chief government of New Spain; but in case they were absent he conferred the same power on Estrada and Albornoz.

As Cortes could not be persuaded to embark in person for New Spain, but was determined to continue the colonization of the country about Truxillo, although he could do no more than he had done, Sandoval and he at length agreed to despatch to Mexico one of the

officers of his household, named Martin de Orantes, a remarkably shrewd and clever man, who might have been intrusted with business of the greatest importance. This Orantes was furnished with papers by Cortes, in which he gave Pedro de Alvarado and Francisco de las Casas, if they were in Mexico, full power to take upon themselves the chief government of New Spain until Cortes' return thither. If, however, they were not staying there, then he conferred this power on the treasurer Alonso de Estrada, and the accountant Albornoz. Cortes, at the same time, deprived the factor and veedor of any share in the government, and wrote very friendly letters both to Estrada and Albornoz, although he was well aware how the latter had calumniated him to his majesty. He likewise sent letters to all those of the Conquistadores whom he knew favoured his party. Orantes himself took the chief command of the vessel which was to convey him, and he was instructed to run into a certain bay which lay between Vera Cruz and Panuco. No one was to go on shore but Orantes, and the vessel was instantly to return when he had landed, to which the pilot and sailors were bound down by a solemn oath, and richly remunerated, that they might not be induced to break it.

The best of the three vessels lying in the harbour was fitted out for this purpose, and after Orantes, with all the crew had attended mass, he set sail with a favorable wind. The Almighty prospered this voyage so greatly that the vessel arrived in the bay determined upon, and Orantes, according to his instructions, immediately disembarked. After he had offered up his prayers to Heaven for his safe arrival, he disguised himself in the dress of a labourer, and so set out on foot for Mexico. He had taken the great precaution to conceal his papers next to his skin, and as he was an excellent pedestrian he soon reached some Indian townships, where also a few Spaniards were staying, whom he avoided as much as he possibly could, that he might not be recognized by them. Now and then, indeed, he could not help coming up with a Spaniard, yet they did not recognize him, as he had been absent for two years and three months, in which time he had allowed his beard to grow. If any one asked him who he was and whence he came, he told them, that his name was Juan de Flechilla, and that he was a poor labourer. By this means he passed through the country without being recognized, and he made so much haste that he arrived in Mexico on the fourth day after landing. It was in the night-time he entered the town, and he instantly repaired to the cloister of the Franciscans, where he found a considerable number of Cortes' friends, who had sought refuge there from the factor's persecutions. Of these

the principal personages were Jorge de Alvarado, Andreas de Tapia, Juan Nuñez de Mercado, Pedro Moreno Medrano, and several other of the veteran Conquistadores.

As soon as these men recognized Orantes, and learnt from him that Cortes was alive and had despatched him with letters to them, they were almost overcome with joy, and jumped about the room as if they had been out of their senses. Even the Franciscan monks themselves, with brother Toribio Motolinia, and brother Domingo Altamirano, danced about the room with delight, and offered up fervent thanks to God for this good news. All the doors of the cloister were immediately fastened and no one allowed egress, as there were several persons among them who were not to be trusted. About the hour of midnight the treasurer Estrada and the accountant Albornoz were sent for, besides several other of Cortes' adherents, the whole of whom hastened to the cloister in all secrecy. The commissions which Orantes had brought were read aloud, and all present were unanimously of opinion that their first step must be to seize the factor's person. The whole night was spent in deliberations and letting into the secret those in whom they could place confidence; the necessary arms were got in readiness, and early in the morning a sudden attack was to be made upon the factor's palace. Fortunately, the veedor was still stationed with the troops in Coatlan, so that they had not much opposition to fear. As soon as daylight appeared the whole of Cortes' adherents sallied forth in a body from the cloister, accompanied by Orantes, that every one might see him, and they hastened off to the factor's abode, under the cry of: "*Long live the emperor, and in his imperial name Hernando Cortes, who is still alive and will shortly arrive in person! I, his servant Orantes, have come to announce his approach.*"

The inhabitants, hearing this sudden alarm so early in the morning, flew as usual to arms, imagining their aid was required in the name of his majesty; and scarcely had they recognized Orantes, and heard that Cortes was alive, when they joined Estrada in great numbers. The accountant Albornoz, however, though Cortes had appointed him joint governor with the former, evinced very little zeal in this matter; the steps which had been taken did not seem to meet with his approbation, and he expressed himself in so dubious a manner that Estrada was obliged to put him in mind of a few circumstances which soon brought him to his proper senses.

When they approached the dwelling of the factor, they found him quite on his guard, for he had been secretly informed by the accountant Albornoz of what was going to happen. The park of artillery, under

the command of Don Luis de Guzman, a nephew of the duke of Medina Sidonia, was ready loaded, and the factor's body-guard, commanded by the captain Artiaga, Gines Nortes, and Pedro Gonsalez, stood ready drawn out to defend any attack upon the palace. But Jorge de Alvarado and the confederates were not to be daunted by this, and forced their way into the palace, from different sides, some even clambered to the top of the roof and forced an entrance that way. The cannons were certainly fired off against them, but the captain of the artillery, Guzman, fired in one direction and the artillerymen in another; Artiaga, captain of the guards, concealed himself, and Gines Nortes took to his heels. At last the factor had no one about his person but Pedro Sabiote, and four of his servants. Finding his men had thus deserted him, he seized a match in order to fire the cannon himself; but the confederates rushed so suddenly upon him that he was obliged to surrender himself prisoner. For the moment a strong guard was put over him, until a cage was constructed of heavy beams, in which he was then securely fastened.

Thus ended the power of this man, and couriers were despatched in all haste to every town in New Spain, to spread the news. This change was hailed by some, but others again, on whom the factor had bestowed commendaries, seemed anything but pleased; and when intelligence of the factor's overthrow reached the camps at Coatlan and Oaxaca, the veedor was so excessively alarmed at the bad news that he fell ill, conferred the chief command of the troops on Monjaraz, who was suffering dreadfully from disease of the groins, and he actually sought refuge in the Franciscan cloister at Tezcuco. By this time, however, the new governors had despatched a number of Alguacils in search of him; when, therefore, they learnt whither he had flown, they entered the cloister without any ceremony, and carried him off prisoner to Mexico, where he was locked up in a similar cage to that which the factor inhabited.

Upon this, couriers were sent to Guatimala, to inform Alvarado of the fall of the factor and veedor. As the province he was then staying in was not very distant from Truxillo, the confederates also conveyed to him their letters to Cortes, containing an account as to how the whole affair had been managed, and that it was necessary for him to repair to Mexico in all haste. With these letters Alvarado was requested to set off in person for Truxillo, and when there he was to urge Cortes to leave without any further delay. The first thing which Estrada did was to restore Juana de Mansilla to honour, whom, it will be remembered, the factor had whipped for a witch through the streets of

Mexico. The following was the method which Estrada adopted to honour this injured woman; the whole of the cavaliers were ordered to mount their horses, he himself placing Juana Mansilla on his saddle behind him, and in this way, at the head of the cavalcade, he paraded every street of the city. "This woman," he said, "had behaved like the Roman matrons of old, wherefore the insult which had been offered to her person by the factor, should now be made to exalt her in the estimation of all honest men." And, indeed, she could not be too highly honoured for the praiseworthy conduct she had pursued, and ever after she was addressed as Doña Juana de Mansilla. The factor could not induce her to form a second marriage, and, notwithstanding all his persecution, she had steadfastly maintained that her husband and all of us were still alive.

CHAPTER CLXXXIX.

How the treasurer, with several other cavaliers, requested the Franciscan monks to despatch father Diego de Altamirano, a relation of Cortes, to Truxillo, to desire our general to hasten his departure for Mexico.

The treasurer and other cavaliers of Cortes' party soon saw how necessary it was that our general should lose no time in repairing to New Spain, for a strong party was already forming against him, which might become the more formidable, as no reliance was to be placed on Albornoz. This man had, from the very commencement, greatly disapproved of the imprisonment of the factor and veedor: his principal reason for which was, that he feared Cortes might have received intelligence of the infamous manner in which he had calumniated him in secret letters to the emperor. Cortes' party, therefore, considered there was not a moment to be lost, and begged of the Franciscan monks to despatch father Diego de Altamirano to Truxillo, for which purpose they had already fitted out a vessel, manned with the best sailors. They had purposely made choice of father Diego, from his being related to Cortes, and because he had formerly been a soldier, and was altogether a man of business-like habits. Altamirano readily undertook to fulfil this commission, and the other brothers gave their immediate consent to his departure.

Matters were now daily gaining a more unfavorable aspect in Mexico. The accountant Albornoz, as I have already stated, bore a dubious character, and was very adverse to the recent change; besides which,

the factor himself had still a number of adherents among the more turbulent spirits, whose friendship he had gained with gold and lucrative commendaries. These personages, therefore, secretly conspired with several other men of distinction, to murder the treasurer, with the whole of his party, and to liberate the factor and veedor from their cages. When the accountant was let into this secret, it is said, he was excessively delighted.

The conspirators commenced their operations by enlisting among their number a locksmith, named Guzman, a very poor fellow, but much addicted to low wit. They first made him take an oath of secrecy, and then commissioned him to construct a key to open the cages in which the factor and veedor were imprisoned, and to ensure his fidelity they gave him a large piece of gold. This man declared he was ready to serve them as much as lay in his power, and appeared the more eager to do so the more they assured him of the importance of his services, and the more he became acquainted with the extent of the conspiracy. He made every appearance as if he wished nothing more sincerely than the liberation of the factor and veedor, and inquired the names and number of the conspirators, with the day and hour they intended to rise up in arms. After he had gained sufficient information of every circumstance he commenced making a key according to the impression they had given him, but purposely constructed it in such a manner as not to open the lock, that the conspirators might return with it to him. As in this way they came several times backwards and forwards to his shop, he continually gained further information respecting their plans. When the whole of the conspirators stood ready armed, merely awaiting his key to commence the murderous attack, the locksmith hastened to Estrada and discovered the whole plot to him.

The treasurer, without saying a word to Albornoz, instantly assembled the whole of Cortes' party, and repaired at their head to the house where the conspirators had met for the purpose of sallying out in a body at a preconcerted signal. Twenty of their number were soon seized, but the rest saved themselves by a precipitate flight. The prisoners were instantly put upon their trial, when it was clearly proved that they contemplated murdering the treasurer and liberating the factor and veedor. It was also discovered that Albornoz was cognisant of the conspiracy, and that three or four very dangerous and rebellious fellows were concerned in it, who had performed a conspicuous part in all the disorders that had taken place in Mexico during Cortes' absence, one of whom had even insulted a Spanish lady in the grossest manner.

A criminal suit was soon after instituted against these latter personages by the bachelor Ortega, alcalde mayor of Mexico. The whole of them were found guilty of sedition, three were sentenced to be hung, and several of the other conspirators to be scourged. Those sentenced to the gallows were Pastrana, Valverde, and Escobar; the names of the others I have forgotten.

As for the locksmith, he durst not venture out of doors for several days; fearing the partisans of the factor would assassinate him in revenge for having betrayed the secret.

Although it may be thought rather out of place here, I must observe that the factor had indeed despatched to Spain the vessel, mentioned in a former chapter, with the gold which he had collected for his majesty. In his despatches he stated Cortes' death as a fact of which there was not the slightest doubt; he then went on to magnify the great confidence which all parties placed in him (the factor); and he concluded by petitioning his majesty to confer the appointment of governor on him. However, by this same vessel, other letters were secretly forwarded to his majesty, in which his majesty was duly apprized of every circumstance that had transpired in New Spain, with a full account of the tyrannical and cruel government of the factor. His majesty was also at the same time informed by the royal court of audience at St. Domingo and the Hieronymite brotherhood that Cortes was alive and busily occupied in subduing and colonizing the country along the coast of the Honduras. When, therefore, the council of the Indies and the comendador mayor of Leon communicated with his majesty on the affairs of New Spain, it is said that the emperor expressed himself as follows: "The people of New Spain have done very wrong indeed in rising up against Cortes, and have greatly injured the true interests of the crown; but as Cortes is still alive, I trust that, on his return to Mexico, he will severely punish the villains who have caused so much disorder."

I must now return to father Altamirano, who set sail from Vera Cruz, and arrived, after a most favorable passage of two days, in Truxillo. As soon as the inhabitants of this town observed a large vessel in the horizon, they immediately concluded it came from New Spain to convey our general thither. Altamirano, the instant he arrived in the harbour, stepped on shore, with several others, and repaired to Cortes' abode, who gave them all a most hearty welcome, and again recognized several of them whom he had previously known in Mexico. The whole of them then went to church to offer up their prayers to God.

On their return to Cortes' quarters, Altamirano minutely related

every circumstance that had taken place in Mexico during his absence. Our general was sorely grieved at what he heard, and yet he returned fervent thanks to the Almighty that matters were not worse, and that peace had been restored to the city. He said, however, that he would return to New Spain by land, as he was afraid of the sea, after having twice set sail, and each time been obliged, by contrary winds and heavy currents, to put back into the harbour; besides which, he thought he was in too weak a state of health to bear the fatigues of a sea voyage. The pilots, however, assured him that, being now the month of April, there was less apprehension of boisterous winds, and the best of weather was to be expected at this time of the year. By these representations Cortes was induced to alter his determination, and he made up his mind to journey thither by sea, but would postpone his departure until the return of Sandoval, whom he had despatched with a detachment of troops to Olancho, a distance of about 600 miles from the coast, to drive out of this province a captain named Rojas, who had been sent out to explore the gold mines of the country by Pedro Arias, after the latter had beheaded Francisco Hernandez.

The Indians of Olancho had journeyed all the way to Truxillo to make bitter complaints to Cortes of the Spaniards at Nicaragua, who, they said, had fallen hostilely into their country, plundering them with impunity, and carrying off their wives and daughters.

Sandoval, on this expedition, was only accompanied by sixty men, and, on arriving in Olancho, at first was going to imprison Rojas, but several cavaliers stepping in as mediators between the two captains, they came to more amicable terms, and parted the best of friends, after Rojas had presented Sandoval with one of his Indian pages. While the latter was yet here, he received Cortes' letter, in which, after giving him a short account of what had taken place in Mexico, he was desired immediately to repair with his troops to Truxillo. No intelligence could have been more welcome to Sandoval; and, after arranging matters with Rojas, he marched with the utmost expedition towards the coast.

Cortes conferred upon Saavedra the chief command of the provinces about Truxillo, and gave him particular instructions as to what he was to do. He also wrote to Luis Marin and we others who were under his command, informing us of the arrival of father Altamirano, and desiring us to march forward to Guatimala. The captain Diego de Godoy, who had previously commanded in Puerto de Caballos, was ordered to march with his men into the province of Naco. The letters which were destined for us, Cortes gave in charge to Saavedra, with

instructions that they were to be forwarded to us immediately; but, from sheer malice, he neglected to do so, and they never came to hand. To return to my narrative; I must not forget to mention that Cortes, previous to embarking, fell so dangerously ill again that his life was actually despaired of, and the last sacrament was administered to him; yet he had the good fortune to recover this time also, and he set sail from Truxillo with a considerable suite. He had the most beautiful weather all the way to the Havannah, where he put in to await a more favorable wind for his passage to New Spain. The inhabitants of the last-mentioned town were exceedingly rejoiced at seeing him again, and he greatly recruited his strength in this place. While here, he even received very satisfactory accounts from Mexico, where the news of his speedy return had produced this good effect, that the Indians of Coatlan called of their own account upon the treasurer Estrada, and again submitted, on certain conditions, as vassals of our emperor.

CHAPTER CXC.

Cortes sets sail from the Havannah, and has a favorable passage to Vera Cruz, where he is received with the greatest rejoicings.

After Cortes had been five days at the Havannah, he began to grow very impatient for the hour of his departure, so greatly did he long to be once more in Mexico. He therefore gave orders for embarking without any further delay, and arrived, after a very favorable passage of twelve days, in the harbour of Medellin, opposite the island of Sacrificios, where he dropped anchor for the night. He himself disembarked, with twenty of his most trustworthy soldiers, intending to march to San Juan de Ulua, which was only a couple of miles distant; but it fortunately happened he should come up with a party of travellers who had a number of horses with them, and were on their way to the harbour he had just left to embark for Spain. Cortes took possession of the horses, and then proceeded direct to Vera Cruz, which was distant about twenty miles.

When he stepped on shore, he had given strict orders that no one should hasten to the last-mentioned town to announce his arrival. It was about two o'clock in the morning when he entered Vera Cruz, and he immediately repaired with his suite to the church, the door of which was open. After they had been a short time in the church, the sacristan, who had but recently arrived from Spain, walked in, and he was

not a little astonished to find the seats filled with strangers, of whom not a single person was known to him. Quite alarmed, he instantly hurried out into the streets, called out to the watch, and hastened to call up the chief authorities to inform them that there were a great number of strangers in the church. The alcalde-mayor soon made his appearance with the other magistrates, three alguacils, and several of the inhabitants. The whole of them marched armed into the church, and peremptorily commanded the strangers to leave the church without delay. As Cortes was very much fatigued with the journey, and scarcely looked himself, he was not recognized by the inhabitants until they heard his voice. They then at the same moment knew father Juan again by the white robe of his order, though the former was become considerably the worse for wear. As soon as they found that it was Cortes himself who stood in their presence, the whole of them crowded up to pay their respects to him and to congratulate him on his safe arrival. Among those present there were several of the veteran Conquistadores, whom Cortes immediately addressed by name, and embraced them under the most flattering assurances of his friendship. Upon this, mass was read, and after it was finished the magistrates conducted our general to his quarters, which were in one of the most beautiful houses of the town. Here he stayed eight days, during which time several festivities took place in his honour, and notice of his arrival was instantly sent off to Mexico. He himself wrote letters to the treasurer Estrada and to the accountant Albornoz, although he was well aware that this person was very ill inclined towards him. If the news of his arrival was hailed with joy in the metropolis, it was no less so by the Indians of the country surrounding Vera Cruz, who sent him numerous presents of gold, cotton stuffs, fruits, and of fowls. They likewise cleared the roads for him all the way to Mexico, built huts for his accommodation at different stages along his route, and furnished provisions in abundance. Every one who could followed in his suite, and his whole march to Mexico appeared like a triumphal procession. Presents and refreshments came pouring in from all sides, ambassadors arrived from the different townships to assure him that if the notice of his approach had not been so short, they would have made more suitable arrangements for his reception, begging of him at the same time to take his route through their towns, when it would be in their power to give him a more honorable reception. The Tlascallans, above all, were most zealous to evince their attachment to him; the whole of the principal caziques came out to meet him, and received him with dances, songs, and all manner of rejoicings.

When he had arrived within twelve miles of Tezcuco, a town almost equal in magnitude to Mexico, he was met by the accountant Albornoz, who stood ready there to receive him, and, if possible, to regain his friendship, for he greatly feared the resentment of our general. Besides Albornoz, there were numbers of other Spaniards from this neighbourhood who came out to meet him, and the caziques of the town had marched out to the distance of eight miles, and performed various dances and games in his honour, all of which pleased our general very much. In Tezcuco itself other rejoicings took place, and here he passed the night, though he might easily have reached Mexico on the same day, but he had been requested by the treasurer, all the other chief authorities, and the Conquistadores to defer his arrival thither until the morrow, in order that they might make preparations to receive him in the most splendid manner possible.

The following morning accordingly, the treasurer, accompanied by all the city authorities, the officers of the crown, the Conquistadores, and all Cortes' best friends came out to meet him, clothed in their full uniform, and preceded by a large band of music. The Mexican caziques then followed with their several devices, decked out in their full war costume in which they had fought against us under their late monarch Quauhtemoctzin; they celebrated all manner of games after their fashion, while at the same time the lake was covered with canoes full of armed Indians, just in the same manner as when they fought with us who were stationed on the causeways. In short, the rejoicings in the city were so manifold and great that a description can give no idea of them. During the whole day there was dancing and music in every street, and in the evening every house was illuminated. But what was better than all this, the Franciscan monks, on the following day, formed a solemn procession to the church, and public thanksgivings were offered up to the Almighty for Cortes' safe return.

Cortes himself, immediately on his entering the city, had repaired to their cloister to attend mass, and to offer up his thanks to God for having preserved his life in all the dangers of the late campaign. Not until he had performed this duty did our general repair to his dwelling, which had been finished during his absence, and had indeed every appearance of a magnificent palace, in which he was really courted and feared as though he had been a king. From every province the Indians sent ambassadors to him with presents, and even the caziques of Coatlan came to pay their respects to him, and bring him presents.

Cortes' entry into Mexico took place in the month of June, 1524 or 1525, I forget which.[49] He remained quiet for several days to rest

from his fatigues before he ordered the turbulent personages to be seized, and an inquiry to be made into the late conduct of the veedor and factor. In the same way Diego de Ocampo, or Gonzalo de Ocampo, I really cannot remember which of the two it was on whom those libellous papers were found against Cortes, was also thrown into chains. The scribe Ocaña, an old man, who was commonly called the life and soul of the factor, shared a similar fate. Criminal suits, as they are termed, were certainly instituted against these personages, and Cortes might have inflicted due punishment upon them without any further ceremony, and his just retribution would have met with every approbation in Spain; but he neglected to do so, though his majesty himself had fully expected he would have adopted such a course. This I can assure the reader to be a fact, for I was told it by the members of the council of the Indies themselves, when I was in Spain in the year 1540 on account of some law-suits which were pending between myself and others. The bishop Bartolome de las Casas was present at the time. It was the opinion of all that Cortes had been remarkably negligent in this matter, and that he had shown very little of his wonted spirit on the occasion.

CHAPTER CXCI.

How the licentiate Luis Ponce de Leon, who was commissioned to make inquiries into Cortes' government of New Spain, arrives in the harbour of San Juan de Ulua.

I HAVE already mentioned in a former chapter that the emperor, during his stay at Toledo, had commissioned Luis Ponce de Leon to repair to Mexico, and there to institute a formal inquiry against Cortes; and if he found him guilty, to punish him so severely, that the whole world might know it. He had been previously furnished with all the particulars of the several accusations which had been brought against Cortes.

It was not for a length of time that this man received the necessary despatches, which had greatly retarded his departure. At length, however, he arrived, after a favorable passage, with three or four vessels, in the harbour of San Juan de Ulua, where he immediately landed, and repaired to the town of Medellin. As he made no secret of the purport of his arrival, one of the officers of Cortes' household immediately sent his master intelligence of the nature of this gentleman's visit, so that

Cortes was apprized of it four days after Leon's arrival. When our general received these letters from Villalobos, the officer above mentioned, he happened to be in the Franciscan cloister, making the holy communion, and humbly supplicating the Almighty to bless his endeavours. This news was the more disagreeable to him, as Ponce de Leon seemed to hasten his journey to Mexico in such a manner as if he did not wish to allow him time to make the necessary arrangements for his reception. In the meantime, however, he despatched some of his most confidential friends to learn something more of the newly arrived, and whether they were really provided with a proper commission from his majesty; but a couple of days after he had received the first news, three couriers arrived from Leon with letters for Cortes; among others there was one from the emperor, in which his majesty acquainted him that an investigation would be instituted against him on various accounts. Our general perused the emperor's letter with the deepest veneration, and declared that it was a proof of great mercy on the part of his majesty to have despatched a proper judge, that justice might be done him against his enemies. Cortes returned an answer to Leon by the same couriers, expressing himself in the most obliging and friendly terms, requesting of him at the same time to state along which road he intended journeying to Mexico, in order that he might make the necessary preparations for his reception at the different stages along his route.

The licentiate, in reply to this letter, returned Cortes the most sincere thanks for his kind wishes, saying he was desirous of staying a few days where he was, to rest from the fatigues of the sea voyage.

While staying at Medellin, various accusations were brought against Cortes, both by letter and word of mouth, as the latter had many enemies at Medellin, composed partly of those who had accompanied him on the expedition to the Honduras, partly of those who had been previously banished from Panuco; besides which, there were several discontented persons in Mexico, who would gladly have worked out our general's ruin. Here, it was said, Cortes was hastening to bring the trial of the factor and the veedor to a close, before the licentiate Leon should arrive. The latter had better be upon his guard; for Cortes, with his courteous and flattering sentences, only wished to learn from him by which road he intended journeying to Mexico, in order to put him to death by some means or other. The same artifice he had employed against Narvaez and Garay. Further, they assured Leon that Cortes had sacrificed the lives of a considerable number of Spanish troops, and of above 3000 Mexicans, in the expedition to the Honduras;

that he had left there Diego de Godoy, one of his officers, with thirty Spaniards, all suffering from ill health; the whole of whom had since perished. This we found indeed to be a fact. They then begged of the licentiate Leon to leave all other considerations, to hasten to Mexico, and to remember what had befallen Narvaez, Garay, and Tapia, to whom Cortes likewise made every show of respect and affection, but had, some how or other, obliged them to return home again without accomplishing their object. In short, they calumniated our general in every possible manner, and actually succeeded in persuading Leon that Cortes would not listen to his commission.

The licentiate was accompanied by several cavaliers, among whom were the alguacil mayor Proaño of Cordoba and his brother, Salazar de Petraza, who came with the appointment of alcalde of the fortifications of Mexico, but he died shortly after of pleurisy; further, the bachelor or licentiate Marcos de Aguilar, a soldier of the name of Bocanegra of Cordoba, and several monks of the order of the Dominicians, with their provincial father Thomas Ortiz, who had been for several years prior of some cloister, but I forgot where; however, every one was of opinion that he was better suited for business than for a religious life. With these personages Leon held a consultation as to whether he should proceed immediately to Mexico or not; and they were unanimously of opinion that he should repair thither without delay.

The licentiate accordingly set out on his journey, and arrived in Iztapalapan when Cortes was about to despatch other couriers with letters and refreshments to him. Here, however, he met with a most splendid reception, and a sumptuous banquet was prepared for him, at which Andreas de Tapia figured as master of the ceremonies. Ponce de Leon enjoyed himself very much at table, and was perfectly astonished when fresh cream and cheese were also handed to him. He and the cavaliers who accompanied him eat so heartily of these dainties, that several of them were obliged to leave the table, having been seized with sudden pains in their bowels. Although the others felt not the slightest effects of the cream, father Thomas Ortiz instantly declared it had been poisoned, and that he would take good care not to touch it. The other gentlemen, however, who sat at table declared that he had stuffed down as much of it as any of them; but as Tapia had been master of the ceremonies on this occasion, the newly-arrived guests declared that all was not right.

Cortes himself was not present at this banquet in Iztapalapan, but had remained in Mexico, where a rumour was soon spread that he had immediately forwarded to Leon a considerable present of gold bars.

Whether there was any truth in this I cannot say, though many persons positively asserted there was no truth in it.

As Iztapalapan was only eight miles from Mexico, Cortes learnt the exact hour when Leon would arrive in the city; he therefore went out to meet him, accompanied by the whole of the cavalry then at Mexico, and immediately around his person were Sandoval, the treasurer Alonso de Estrada, the accountant Albornoz, Jorge and Gomez de Alvarado, and then followed the whole of the chief authorities of the town and a number of the Conquistadores. When Cortes and Leon met on the causeway, they greeted each other in the most respectful manner imaginable. The latter was not a little astonished at the courteous behaviour of our general, and it was not till after much pressing that he would allow Cortes to concede the place of honour to him. When he entered the city, beheld the large fortifications, and the numerous towns lying around the lake, he declared that no other general in the world, with so small a body of troops, would have been able to take this strong city, and subdue so vast a territory.

The procession then repaired to the Franciscan cloister, where mass was said. When this was finished, Cortes begged Leon to produce his commission, as the first thing he should demand was that the veedor and factor might be put upon their trial. Leon, however, desired that this might be postponed until the morrow, and Cortes then conducted him to his palace, which had been hung with beautiful tapestry, and where a splendid repast was awaiting them. Everything was served in gold and silver, and the whole table was so beautifully arranged, that Leon could not help remarking, in an under tone, to his alguacil-mayor Proaño and to Bocanegra, that Cortes, in his manners and conversation, had every appearance of a man who had lived like a grand señor for many years.

The following day all assembled in the principal church of the city, whither Cortes had desired all the civic functionaries, the officers of the crown, and the Conquistadores to meet. After mass had been celebrated, Leon, in due form, produced his royal commission, which Cortes perused with deep veneration, kissed it, and declared that it contained the mandates of his emperor and master, to which he would pay implicit obedience.

Every one present then followed Cortes' example, by turns; upon which Leon desired the alcalde-mayor, the ordinary alcaldes, the officers of the Hermandad, and the alguacils, to hand him their several staffs of office; which having been done, he immediately returned them to the respective persons. He then turned to Cortes, and addressed him

as follows: "Señor capitan, his majesty has commanded me to take upon myself the chief government of New Spain; not that I think you unworthy of filling this office, and even others of greater importance, but because our sovereign master so commands."

Cortes thanked him in the most respectful terms, with the assurance that he was always ready to act strictly up to his majesty's commands; and Leon himself, he added, would be convinced, from the investigation he was ordered to set on foot, that he (Cortes) had always proved himself a loyal and faithful subject of his majesty; and how falsely he had been accused and calumniated by evil-minded persons.

To this the licentiate answered, that it was ever so in the world; that where there were honest people, there were also others of a contrary character; and that we must expect praise from those to whom we have shown kindness, and calumny from those towards whom we have been obliged to act harshly. This was all that took place on the first day.

On the following day, after mass, which was celebrated in the palace, Ponce de Leon sent a cavalier with a most courteous message to our general, desiring him to wait upon him. During the discourse which now ensued, there was, besides themselves, no one present excepting the prior Thomas Ortiz; and the licentiate thus addressed our general: "I must, first of all, inform you, señor capitan, that his majesty has particularly desired me to bestow lucrative commendaries on all the veteran Conquistadores; those who first left the island of Cuba for the conquest of New Spain and the city of Mexico; as also on those who subsequently joined your troops, and likewise assisted in the conquest; but to favour the former somewhat more than the latter. I announce these, his majesty's commands, to you, as I have been informed that, in the distribution of the Indians, you have but poorly remunerated several of the veteran Conquistadores, who first landed with you in New Spain; but that, on the other hand, you have presented considerable lands on persons recently arrived from Spain, who had no claim thereto whatever. If this is really true, I am bound to observe, that you have not acted up to the views of his majesty, when he conferred upon you the appointment of governor of these countries."

To this Cortes replied, that there was not one of the Conquistadores whom he had not rewarded; that some, indeed, had fared better in the distribution of the Indians than others; but that, owing to many unforeseen circumstances, he had not been able to do justice to all; and that, on this account alone, he hailed his arrival in New Spain, to satisfy all parties; for the whole of the Conquistadores had every claim to be handsomely rewarded.

The licentiate then questioned him respecting the expedition to the Honduras, and asked him which of the Conquistadores had accompanied him on that occasion, and how they had fared; but he wished particularly to know what had become of the thirty or forty men whom he had left under the command of an officer, named Diego de Godoy, to perish of hunger at Puerto de Caballos?

This latter reproach was, unfortunately, too well founded in truth, as we shall presently see; and certainly, as men who had been present at the siege of Mexico, and assisted in the conquest of New Spain, they, at least, had merited to live quietly in the enjoyment of the fruits of their labour. Cortes ought rather to have taken along with him on that expedition those troops only which had recently arrived from Spain.

Ponce de Leon then made inquiries after the captain Luis Marin, after Bernal Diaz del Castillo, and the rest of the men who were with him.

To all these inquiries Cortes answered: "That it would have been useless for him to have attempted an expedition to countries so far distant, attended with so many difficulties, without those veterans who were inured to the hardships of a military life. But he could assure him that the troops which had been left behind were on their way to Mexico, and that the whole of them were men whom he would particularly recommend to his consideration, and who deserved to have the most lucrative commendaries bestowed upon them."

The licentiate then continued in a more earnest tone of voice, and asked Cortes: "How, without his majesty's permission, he had dared to set out on so tedious an expedition, by which he knew he must absent himself for so long a time from the seat of his government, and which had, as he knew, almost proved the destruction of the city of Mexico?"

To this Cortes answered: "That as his majesty's captain-general he had been bound to pursue such a course, for, if he had not taken some active step, the example of revolt set by Oli would have been followed by other officers. Besides which, he had previously announced his intention to his majesty of marching thither."

After this explanation the licentiate touched upon the defeat and imprisonment of Narvaez, the capture of Garay's vessels, the loss of his troops, and his sudden death; and, lastly, on the manner in which he had obliged Christobal de Tapia to reembark; besides these, he questioned him on various other matters, which I will not enumerate here. To all of which Cortes gave such excellent answers, that Ponce de Leon appeared pretty well satisfied.

I have above remarked, there was no one present during this conference excepting father Thomas Ortiz. This person, immediately

after it was ended, called upon three intimate friends, and assured them, in all confidence, that it was Leon's intention to sentence Cortes to decapitation, in accordance with the commands of his majesty, and that it was for this purpose only he had put the above-mentioned questions to him. Ortiz, the next morning, very early, called upon our general himself, and said to him: "Señor capitan, the great respect I entertain for you, my spiritual office, and the rules of the order I belong to, make it imperative on me to warn people in cases like these; I will therefore not hide from you that his majesty has given Leon full power to put you to death."

This communication appeared to affect Cortes very much, nor could he think lightly of it when he considered the questions which the licentiate had put to him; yet, on the other hand again, he was well aware that this monk was an evil-minded person, and that very little reliance could be placed in what he said. Perhaps he had made up this story himself, that Cortes might ask him to intercede for him with Leon, for which the former, he naturally supposed, would not fail to remunerate him with some gold bars. There were several persons who even affirmed that Leon himself had secretly desired Ortiz to communicate this to our general, to alarm him into a supplication of mercy. However, Cortes replied to father Ortiz in the most courteous manner, thanked him for the communication, and concluded by saying, "He had always entertained hopes that his majesty would reward him for the many great services he had rendered to the crown, and that he should still continue to live in this hope, being conscious that he was perfectly innocent of all guilt, and confident that Ponce de Leon was not the man to exceed his emperor's commands."

By this reply the monk found himself excessively disappointed in his expectations, nor could he hide his confusion. Cortes, however, remained firm to his purpose, and never gave him a single farthing, although Ortiz had reckoned upon so much.

CHAPTER CXCII.

How the licentiate commences the investigation against Cortes, and all those persons who had filled judicial offices; and how he fell ill shortly after and died.

Ponce de Leon publicly announced that a commission of inquiry would be set on foot against Cortes, and against all those who filled

military commands, or held judicial authority. As Cortes had many enemies, and among them several who had real cause of complaint, various old grievances were harrowed up, to substantiate which witnesses were required, and thus it may be imagined the whole city presented one continued scene of lawsuits. One brought his accusations against our general respecting his unjust division of the gold; another complained that, notwithstanding his majesty had particularly ordered Cortes to give him a fair portion of the Indians, in their distribution, the latter had neglected to do so, but had bestowed them on persons whose only merit consisted in their having been servants of Martin Cortes and of the grandees of Spain. Others again demanded an indemnification for their horses which had been killed in the several campaigns, for they did not consider the gold they had received a sufficient compensation for their losses. Lastly, there were also persons who preferred their charges against Cortes for injuries which they had suffered by his orders. These investigations had, however, been scarcely set on foot, when, to our great misfortune, it pleased the Almighty that the licentiate Leon should fall ill.

It appears that he had been attending mass in the Franciscan cloister, on leaving which he was seized with so malignant a fever that he was obliged to be put to bed immediately, and he became so prostrate in strength that he lay in a state of unconsciousness for four successive days. He received every attention from his medical attendants, the licentiate Pedro Lopez, the Dr. Ojeda, and a third physician, who had come with him from Spain; but they were of opinion from the very first moment that his illness was of a dangerous nature, and they advised him to confess and make the holy communion. For this Leon was quite prepared, and he received the holy sacrament with the greatest humility, and then made his last will, in which he appointed the licentiate Marcos de Aguilar, who had accompanied him from Hispaniola, to succeed him in the government.

There were many persons who maintained that this Aguilar was not a licentiate, but that he had only the degree of bachelor; and that, properly speaking, he was not qualified to fill an appointment of this nature. Ponce de Leon, however, seems to have been of a different opinion, and he had his commission drawn out in such a manner that all the actions and inquiries, including the criminal suits against the factor and veedor, should remain as they then were, until his majesty had been informed how far he himself had progressed in these matters; for which purpose a vessel was immediately to be despatched to Spain.

After he had thus arranged his earthly affairs, and had performed

the last duties for the salvation of his soul, he died on the ninth day after he had fallen ill, and delivered up his immortal soul into the hands of his Maker. Great, indeed, was the grief and despondency which his sudden death occasioned to all the Conquistadores. They mourned his loss as if he had been their common father, because they were convinced that it had been his real intention to reward and honour all those who had proved themselves faithful servants to his majesty; for which purpose his majesty had given him the necessary powers and instructions. The Conquistadores, therefore, sincerely lamented the untimely end of this gentleman; and even Cortes himself and the greater part of the cavaliers in Mexico put on mourning for him. His interment took place in the Franciscan cloisters with every pomp and ceremony.

Luis Ponce was very fond of music, and several cavaliers who attended on him told me that, in the last days of his illness, he desired some one to play on the guitar at his bedside, in order to cheer him up. In his last moments even he desired the musician to play a dance, but as he was not able to move his legs from excessive weakness, he at least accompanied the movements with his lips, and this he continued to do until he breathed his last.

The enemies of Cortes and Sandoval, on this occasion, again began to whisper their calumnies abroad, and asserted that they had poisoned Leon in the same manner as they had Garay. Loudest among these slanderers was father Thomas Ortiz, but the latter himself, with several brothers of his order, died of the same infectious disease a few months after. It appears that the vessel which brought Leon from Spain was infected with a kind of pestilential fever; for of above one hundred persons who were on board, many had died during the passage, and a still greater number perished of the same disorder soon after their arrival in Medellin. Most of the monks, likewise, fell victims to this disorder; and it was even said that the disease had spread to Mexico.

CHAPTER CXCIII.

How after the death of Ponce de Leon, Marcos de Aguilar assumes the government; the disputes which arose in consequence, and of other matters.

Those of the Conquistadores who were ill inclined towards Cortes, desired that the commission of inquiry might be continued, notwith-

standing that Ponce de Leon had died, but our general declared that this could not take place according to the wording of Leon's last will; yet, if Aguilar was willing to proceed with the inquiry, he had no objections.

But now the town-council of Mexico threw in their objections, and maintained that Leon was not empowered to leave Marcos de Aguilar sole governor. An important office of this kind required a very different kind of person to Aguilar, who, besides being far advanced in years, was quite infirm, eaten up with sores, and a man of no authority. (I must say his outward appearance was anything but prepossessing, and bespoke deficiency in every way; besides which he knew nothing of the country nor of the persons who had proved themselves meritorious.) In short, the town-council declared him to be a man for whom no one entertained any respect, and it was necessary for a person who held the staff of justice to be looked up to. They were therefore of opinion that the only thing he could do would be to share the government equally with Cortes until his majesty's further pleasure was known.

Marcos de Aguilar, however, was determined to act strictly up to the contents of Leon's last will, by which he was appointed sole governor, and added, that he would not submit, unless, in direct violation of his majesty's commands, they chose to appoint another governor.

The procuradores of all the towns of New Spain urged Cortes, in every possible manner, to take the government into his own hands; and they assured him they would persuade Aguilar, by fair words, to agree to it, particularly as he was always suffering from ill health, and it was perfectly evident the service of God and the true interests of his majesty must suffer in his hands. But whatever they might say to Cortes, he would not enter into their schemes, and always repeated that old Aguilar must govern alone.

Aguilar, indeed, was in a rapid decline, and so feeble, that to keep him alive he was obliged to be suckled by a Spanish woman; besides that, he drank quantities of goats' milk. He likewise about this time lost one of his sons, whom he had brought with him, of the same pestilential fever which hurried Ponce de Leon into the grave.

I must now go back in my history a little, and relate what befel the captain Luis Marin, who, with the troops under his command, had remained behind in Naco, where he was waiting to hear from Sandoval whether Cortes had embarked for Mexico or not; but we never received any tidings from him, as Saavedra, from sheer malice, had omitted to forward us the letters of Sandoval and Cortes, in which they

sent us information of their intended departure for Mexico, with orders for us to march thither overland. As we had thus waited in vain for a length of time for some tidings from Truxillo, Luis Marin determined, with our unanimous consent, to despatch a few horse thither, to ascertain how matters stood. There were ten of us that left Naco on this occasion, under the command of Francisco Marmalejo. We had already fought our way through various hostile tribes up to Olancho, which at present is called Guayape, abounding in lucrative gold mines, when we happened to meet two Spanish invalids and a negro, who assured us that Cortes had set sail several days ago for Mexico, with Sandoval and all the other Conquistadores who were with him. They then added, that he had been induced to embark from the universal solicitations of the citizens of Mexico, who had despatched one of the Franciscan monks to Truxillo, to hasten his departure. Saavedra had been left behind in this latter town as commandant, and was further to subdue the surrounding country.

This intelligence filled all our hearts with joy, and we immediately despatched a letter by some of the inhabitants of Olancho to Saavedra for further information, and in the space of four days we received an answer from him, confirming the account of the two Spaniards. We offered up thanks to God for this good news, and instantly set out on our march for the place where Luis Marin was encamped. We found him in the township of Acalteca, and he was not a little rejoiced at the good news we brought him.

We now, without any further delay, broke up our camp, and commenced our march towards Mexico. We took our route over the township of Mariani, where we came up with six men of the troops under Alvarado, who was on his road in search of us. One of these men was Diego de Villanueva, an excellent soldier, and one of the veteran Conquistadores, who had assisted in the founding of the town of Guatimala: he was a native of Villanueva de la Serena, in the territory of the grand master of the military order of Alcantara. As we were old friends, we gave each other a hearty embrace, and he then told us that Alvarado was marching hither, in company of several cavaliers, in search of Cortes, to hasten his return to Mexico. He likewise gave us full particulars of everything that had taken place in this town during our absence, and how the government of New Spain had been offered to Alvarado, who had not dared to accept of it, from fear of the factor.

After two days' further march, we came up with Alvarado himself, who was encamped, with his men, in a township, called Choluteca Malalaca. It would, indeed, be a difficult task for me to describe the

delight he experienced when we told him of Cortes' departure for Mexico, which was the more excessive, as he was now spared the further fatigues of a long march, on which his troops had already suffered many hardships. In this township we likewise met several of Pedro Arias' officers, one of whom was named Garavito, and another Campannon, who said they were despatched by Arias to discover new countries, and to settle about some boundaries with Alvarado. The whole of our troops, and the two officers of Arias, remained three days in Choluteca, from which place Alvarado despatched a certain Gaspar Arias de Avila, who had settled in Guatimala, to the governor Arias, as we understood, respecting the preliminaries of a marriage, which is indeed most likely, as Gaspar Arias was a great adherer to Alvarado.

On the fourth day we left Choluteca, and continued our march to the province of Guatimala, but before we could reach the territory of Cuzcatlan, through which our route immediately lay, the rainy season set in, and we found the river Lempa so greatly swollen, that it seemed an impossibility for us ever to cross it. The only resource we had left was to fell a ceiba tree of very large dimensions, of which we hollowed out a canoe of such magnitude, that nothing was ever seen equal to it in this country before. Even then it took us five whole days before we had all passed across, during which time we suffered dreadfully from hunger, as we had not a grain of maise left.

After we had passed the river, we came to the townships of Chapanastec, where the inhabitants killed one of our men, named Nicuesa, and wounded three others. These men had gone out in search of provisions, and were attacked before we could come up to their assistance. As we did not wish to be detained any longer, we would not give ourselves the trouble of chastising the inhabitants for their murderous attack. This took place in that province where at present the town of San Miguel is built. From this place we came into the territory of Cuzcatlan, the inhabitants of which we found very hostilely inclined towards us; nevertheless, we had plenty of provisions; and we now came into some townships in the neighbourhood of Petapa, where the Guatimaltecs were lying in wait for us, in deep hollows, between steep rocks. It took us three days before we could succeed in forcing this passage. Here I was slightly wounded by an arrow.

In this way we at length reached Petapa, and the day following we arrived in a valley, to which we gave the name of Fuerto, and in which at present the town of Guatimala stands. At that time the whole of Guatimala was up in arms against us, so that we had to fight our way through the country. I shall never forget the dreadful earthquake we

felt here. We were marching steadily along the slope of a rising ground, when the earth began to tremble so strongly, that several of our soldiers were no longer able to stand on their legs, and fell down; and this fearful shaking continued for a considerable length of time. From this place we had a good road to Old Guatimala, where the two caziques Sacachul and Cinacan generally resided. However, the whole armed force of Guatimala lay in wait for us, in a deep hollow, near the town, to prevent our entry; but we soon dispersed them with considerable loss, and we took up our quarters for the night in the town, which contained many large and beautiful buildings, owing to the circumstance of all the caziques, who governed the neighbouring provinces, residing there. The next morning we again quitted the town, and encamped on the plain, where we constructed ourselves huts. Here we lay for the space of ten days, as Alvarado had twice summoned the inhabitants of Guatimala, and other townships of the surrounding neighbourhood, to submit, and was desirous of knowing what answer they would return; but as they neither sent any message nor ambassadors to him, we again broke up our camp, and continued to move forward by forced marches. We did not, however, pass any way near to the district where Alvarado had left his brother Gonzalo in command of the great body of his troops, for the whole country had risen up in arms. The township we next came to was Olintepec, where we halted for several days, to rest from our fatigues. From this place we marched to Soconusco and Teguantepec, where two of our countrymen, and the Mexican cazique Juan Velasquez, who had been commander-in-chief under Quauhtemoctzin, died on the road. Here it was that we received the first intelligence of the death of the licentiate Leon, which was the more to be regretted, since so much good was expected from him, and the excellent choice which his majesty had made in his person.

We now marched forward with the utmost expedition, so impatient were we to see Mexico again. As, altogether, we were eighty in number, and that under the command of Alvarado, we immediately sent Cortes notice, when we had arrived in Chalco, that on the following day we intended making our entry into Mexico, and we begged that quarters might be got in readiness for us, as, during an absence of above two years and three months, we should almost be strangers there. As soon as it was known in Mexico that we had arrived in Iztapalapan, Cortes, accompanied by several cavaliers, came out to meet us along the causeway. The first building we visited in the town was the principal church, whither we instantly repaired, to offer up our thanks to the Almighty for our safe return. From the church we were conducted by Cortes to

his palace, where a sumptuous repast had been prepared for us. Alvarado took up his quarters in his official dwelling, belonging to the fortifications, of which he was alcalde at that time. Sandoval gave Luis Marin a lodging in his house, and I, and one of my friends, the captain Luis Sanchez, were invited by Andreas de Tapia to take up our abode with him, and we were treated with every mark of respect. I now very soon received from Sandoval, Cortes, and other of my old friends of this town, different articles of wearing apparel, some gold, and a quantity of cacao, all of which were sent as presents to me. The next day after our arrival, I and my friend Luis Sanchez, having first attended mass, walked out together in the town, first of all to pay our respects to the governor Marcos de Aguilar. We requested Sandoval and Tapia to accompany us on this occasion, to interest themselves for us with the governor; to which they readily consented, and they explained to him who we were, what important services we had rendered to the crown, and then begged of him to bestow on us Indian commendaries in the neighbourhood of Mexico, as those we possessed in the province of Guacasualco were of very little value.

Marcos de Aguilar, in reply, promised very kindly to do all he could for us, but at the same time assured us that it was totally out of his power either to grant or take away any commendary, as Ponce de Leon, in his last will, had particularly ordered that all the lawsuits and the unoccupied commendaries should remain as they were until his majesty had otherwise disposed; and concluded by saying, that as soon as he should receive full powers to distribute the Indians, he would present us with the most lucrative commendaries in the whole country.

About this time, also, Diego de Ordas arrived from Cuba in Mexico, and as it was said he had written the letters which the factor sent to Spain, respecting the certainty of our all having perished with Cortes in the late expedition, the latter, Sandoval, and several other cavaliers, reproached him most bitterly for having written things of which he had no certainty, and that by his letters he had brought New Spain to the brink of destruction; but Ordas swore most solemnly that he had never written any letter to that effect. He certainly had been, he said, in a township called Xicalango, and had learnt that two Spanish vessels had lain there for some time; that a dispute had arisen among the men on board, who came to blows, and many on both sides were killed; and that the few who remained were massacred by the Indians. It was respecting this unfortunate affair that he had written to New Spain, and this might, indeed, have caused the rumours to be set afloat of our

total destruction. Moreover, the letter he had written might still be found among the factor's papers, by which they would best be able to convince themselves of the truth of what he had said, and what bad use the factor must have made of it, to serve his own ends.

As the factor and veedor were still kept in close confinement, and Cortes, according to the arrangements made by Leon in his will, could not at present continue the criminal suits against those two persons, besides that he had many other unpleasant matters to attend to just then, he determined to leave the case as it was until his majesty's further pleasure should be known with regard to the government of New Spain. The whole of his time was occupied for the present in reclaiming a great part of his possessions which had been sold to raise a fund that prayers might be offered up in the churches for his departed soul; but this was done with an evil design, that people might think he was really dead. All this property, besides that which had been set apart for the masses for the repose of his soul, was purchased by an inhabitant of Mexico named Juan Caceres the wealthy.

Diego de Ordas finding that Cortes, since the arrival of Leon, had lost his former authority, and that many persons had even the shamelessness to neglect and make him feel the little estimation in which they held him, he, with his usual dexterity of mind, profited by this circumstance to regain the good graces of our general, and advised him to assume all the outward splendour of a grandee, to receive his visitors seated on a canopied throne, and not to allow himself to be called merely Cortes, but to be addressed as Don Hernando Cortes. He at the same time particularly reminded him that the factor was a creature of the comendador-mayor Don Francisco de los Cobos, whose influence in Spain was immense. The protection of such a man, he said, might perhaps be of the utmost importance to him, as his majesty and the council of the Indies were much prejudiced against him; it would be altogether injurious to his interests to act more severely against the factor than the law permitted. This counsel Ordas thought proper to give Cortes, as it was generally suspected in Mexico that he intended putting the factor to death in his prison.

Before I proceed with my narrative I must inform the reader why, when speaking of Cortes, I never call him Don Hernando Cortes, or marquis, or by any other title, but plainly Cortes. The reason is, that he himself was best pleased when he was simply addressed as Cortes; besides that, he was not created marquis until some time after, and that the name of Cortes stood in equal renown throughout the whole of Spain at that time as in the Roman period the names of Julius Cæsar and of

Pompey; and in the Carthaginian as that of Hannibal; or, in the earlier part of our history, the name of the valiant and invincible knight Diego Garcia de Paredes; or, in more recent times, the name of Gonzalo Hernandez, surnamed the Great Captain.

I must also not forget to mention that, about this time, the treasurer Alonso de Estrada married one of his two daughters to Jorge de Alvarado, and the other to Don Luis de Guzman, son of Don Juan de Saavedra, earl of Castellar. During the preliminaries of the marriage it was likewise settled that Pedro de Alvarado should repair in person to Spain in order to obtain from his majesty the appointment of governor of Guatimala for himself, and that, during his absence, his brother Jorge was to take the chief command of this province, and to continue to subdue the hostile tribes. The latter officer, indeed, immediately made preparations for this purpose, and took along with him two hundred Indian auxiliaries from Tlascalla, Mexico, and other provinces.

Marcos de Aguilar at the same time despatched a cavalier named Don Juan Enriquez de Guzman, a near relation of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, into the province of Chiapa to found a colony there. A similar expedition Aguilar sent out under the command of Baltasar Osorio, a nobleman of Seville, to the province of Tabasco. A third expedition he sent out under the command of Alonso Herrera, one of Cortes' soldiers, to subdue the Zapotecs, who inhabit almost inaccessible mountains. I will relate how far these several officers succeeded, in a subsequent page. I must now speak of the speedy termination of Aguilar's government.

CHAPTER CXCIV.

Marcos de Aguilar dies, and in his will appoints the treasurer Alonso de Estrada governor; and of other matters.

I HAVE already stated, in the former chapter, that Marcos de Aguilar was in a miserable state of ill health, yet the physicians contrived to keep him alive for the space of eight months by means of goats' milk and other nourishing food; but, in addition to his other diseases, he was at length attacked by a malignant fever, which soon put an end to all his miseries. By his will he appointed Alonso de Estrada his sole successor in the government, with the same restrictions as he himself had received from Ponce de Leon.

The inhabitants of Mexico, however, and particularly those Spaniards

who had settled in the provinces, placed not the slightest confidence in Estrada's capability of governing, as he did not evince sufficient energy to offer any resistance to the tyrannical conduct of Nuño de Guzman, who, a couple of years previously, had arrived from Spain with the appointment of governor of Panuco. This man, without any ceremony, added whole districts from the territory of Mexico to his province; he paid not the least attention to the instructions he had received from the emperor, and altogether behaved like a furious madman. Among other things, he hung a nobleman of distinction named Pedro Gonzales de Truxillo, who had settled in Mexico, without any form or trial, merely because he had declared that his commendary was not subject to his government but to that of Mexico, as his possessions were not comprehended in the province of Panuco. In like manner he had the audacity to serve several other Spaniards, and he paid not the slightest attention to the remonstrances of the governor Estrada.

The chief authorities of Mexico and the rest of the distinguished cavaliers of the town, seeing how little this tyrannical neighbour cared for their governor, and what little support they had to expect from the latter against the oppression and encroachments of the other, they begged Estrada to give Cortes an equal share in the government with himself, assuring him that the service of God and the true interests of his majesty imperatively demanded this. However, Estrada obstinately refused to listen to their proposal, though others again affirm that Cortes himself was the person who declined in any way to interfere in the government, to put it out of the power of his enemies to say that he was striving by some means or other to raise himself to the head of the government again, and thereby give them an opportunity of confirming their suspicions which they had begun to rumour abroad against him, namely, that Marcos de Aguilar had died by his hand. In short, after many conferences, it was agreed that Sandoval, who was alguacil-mayor, and highly respected by every one, should jointly govern with Estrada, who himself approved of it in every way, though some persons maintained he had merely conceded in the hopes of marrying his daughter to Sandoval, and of obtaining for the latter the appointment of governor of New Spain, which at that time was not considered of so much importance as at the present day.

After every arrangement respecting the government of the country had been settled between Sandoval and Estrada, the latter was advised by his friends to despatch a vessel forthwith to Spain to forward his majesty an account of everything that had taken place, and to draw up this account in such a manner as if he had only taken Sandoval

as a colleague in order to avoid giving Cortes a share of the government.

Cortes' enemies also profited by this opportunity to despatch their letters to Spain, in which they calumniated our general in the foulest manner; they stated right out that he had poisoned Garay, Leon, and Aguilar, and that it was his intention to put the veedor and factor to death; the whole of which, however, were most barefaced and scandalous lies. To all this was added, that about the same time the accountant Albornoz, who was never well inclined towards Cortes, went to Spain to injure him in every possible manner. After his majesty and the council of the Indies had read all the letters and despatches, which seemed to vie with each other in their complaints against Cortes, and were moreover confirmed by Albornoz, all the former accusations respecting his treatment of Narvaez, Tapia, and his conduct towards his first wife, Doña Catalina Suarez la Marcaida, were harrowed up again, and actually gained credit in all their distortion. The emperor, therefore, came to the determination to appoint Estrada sole governor of New Spain; he confirmed all his previous acts and deeds, gave him power to distribute the commendaries according to the best of his judgment, and ordered that the factor and veedor should again be set at liberty and reinstated in all their former possessions.

A vessel was immediately despatched from Spain with these his majesty's commands, which soon arrived in Mexico; but this was not all, for his majesty also ordered the comendador-mayor of the order of Alcantara, Don Pedro de la Cueva, to equip three hundred soldiers at Cortes' expense, to repair with these to New Spain, there to make inquiries into the complaints which had been made against Cortes, with full power, if he should find them founded in truth, to cut off his head. In the same way the comendador was to punish all those who had acted against the real interests of the crown; he was to take away all the townships in possession of Cortes, and to distribute them among the veteran Conquistadores. His majesty likewise ordered that a royal court of audience should be appointed at Mexico, as a supreme court of justice.

The departure of the comendador-mayor, however, was so long deferred, that at last it was given up altogether; for it met with great opposition at court, and the comendador was either not supplied with so large a sum of money as he had asked for, or perhaps the duke of Bejar had again espoused Cortes' cause, as on former occasions.

But to return to the treasurer Estrada. He grew excessively vain and proud when he found himself so highly favoured by his majesty as to

be appointed sole governor of New Spain; and he had been assured that the emperor knew he was a son of his catholic majesty king Ferdinand. The first thing he did therefore was to despatch his cousin Diego de Mazariegos as captain to Chiapa, to institute an inquiry into the conduct of Don Juan Enriquez de Guzman, to whom Marcos de Aguilar had intrusted the chief command in that province, but who plundered and oppressed the inhabitants in the most shameful manner. In the same way he began to make preparations to subject the townships of the Zapotecs and of the Minxes, and to make success more sure they were to be attacked from two different points at the same time. The troops which were to operate on the north side he gave in command to a certain Barrios, who had previously been captain in Italy. He was a man of great courage, had but recently arrived from Spain, and must not be confounded with Cortes' cousin Barrios, of Seville. The number of his troops, on this expedition, amounted to above one hundred men, including several musketeers and crossbow-men. But this expedition terminated very unfortunately, for scarcely had he arrived in the Tiltepec townships, when one night he was suddenly attacked by the natives, and Barrios himself killed, with seven of his men. The greater part of the remaining troops were wounded, and the whole of them would undoubtedly have been cut to pieces if they had not made a precipitate retreat to Villa-Diego and the neighbouring friendly districts.

This, I think, is a sufficient proof of the difference between the veteran Conquistadores and the troops newly arrived from Spain, who have not the slightest notion of a war with Indians or of their artifices; and thus miserably did this expedition terminate.

The second body of troops were to fall into the Zapotec territory from the side of Guaxaca, and were commanded by an officer named Figuero, who, it was said, had likewise previously been a captain in Spain; one thing is certain, he stood on a most confidential footing with the governor Estrada. He had a like number of troops under his command as Barrios, but also men recently arrived from Spain. As soon as he reached the territory of the Zapotecs, he despatched a messenger to a certain Alonso Herrera to repair to his camp. This Herrera had been sent with a detachment of thirty men into these provinces, during the administration of Marcos de Aguilar.

Figuero had, no doubt, been empowered to take the command over Herrera, for the latter obeyed his orders and arrived in his camp; but they had not been long there together before a terrible dispute arose between them, which ended in their drawing swords, and in Herrera

severely wounding Figuero, besides three soldiers who came up to defend him. As the latter officer, on account of his wounds was unable to use his arm, he gave up all idea of marching to the mountains of the Minxes, which were very difficult of access; besides which, his men had no notion of the warfare of this country; so that in the end he solely turned his attention towards discovering the burial places of the caziques, to open their graves for the sake of the gold ornaments which the inhabitants of olden times were accustomed to bury with their chiefs. This employment he prosecuted with so much vigour, and his endeavours proved so successful, that he collected in this manner above 100,000 pesos worth of gold, and with this treasure, added to some other valuable matters he had found in two of the townships, he determined to retire, and he consequently relinquished the expedition against the Zapotecs and Minxes altogether. He then returned to Mexico with the intention of spending his money quietly in Spain; for which purpose he shortly after set sail from Vera Cruz, but had not been long at sea before he was overtaken by so terrific a storm that the vessel, he himself, with five other passengers and all his gold went to the bottom.

Thus terminated all the governor Estrada's warlike undertakings against these provinces, nor was the rebellion put down until we, the inhabitants of Guacasualco, marched against them and completely subdued the country; though it was no very easy matter for us either, and as the cavalry was of no use among the high mountains there: I was obliged three several times to march out against these tribes; for if we did subdue them during the spring and summer months, they were sure to revolt again when the rainy season set in, and they put every Spaniard they could lay hold of to death. But as we each time vigorously pursued them to their retreats, they at length sued for peace, and then it was that the town of San Alfonso was founded in their country.

The governor Estrada, in the meantime, was determined that Herrera should not go unpunished for wounding his friend Figuero, and issued orders for his apprehension; but he had escaped to the mountains before the arrival of the alguacils, who, in order not to return with empty hands to Mexico, brought back with them in chains a soldier, whom Herrera had generally about his person. This man's name was Cortejo, and he was a hidalgo by birth, yet the governor without so much as bringing him to trial, ordered his right hand to be cut off.

About this time also one of Sandoval's grooms got into high words with one of the governor's servants, so that at length they drew swords

and wounded each other. Even this paltry affair the governor thought it worth his while to resent, and he ordered one of the groom's hands to be cut off. Cortes and Sandoval were not then in Mexico, but had retired to Quauhnahuac, partly to enjoy more peace and get out of the way of the constant cabals, and partly to bring about a good understanding between two caziques of the latter place who had come to blows with each other. They were, however, immediately informed of what had taken place in Mexico, and with the severe punishment with which Sandoval's groom was threatened. They hastened, therefore, to Mexico, but too late to prevent the sentence being put into execution.

Cortes was so enraged at this insult, that he said the most bitter things to the governor in Sandoval's presence, which alarmed him to such a degree that he considered his life in danger from him, and he formed a body guard for the protection of his person, and only selected for this purpose men in whose fidelity he could place implicit reliance. In order, however, still further to strengthen his party against Cortes, he liberated the veedor and factor, who, in acknowledgment for this, hinted to him that he ought to banish Cortes from Mexico, for he would never be able to govern in peace, and the demon of party-spirit would always be sowing discord as long as this man was allowed to remain in the city. This counsel was followed by the governor, who signed the banishment of Cortes, and ordered it to be notified to him. Cortes said he gladly obeyed these commands, and thanked God from the bottom of his heart that things had now come to such a pass, that persons of worthless character, unworthy of the offices they filled, should banish him from a country and a city, in the conquest of which he and his companions in arms had endured every species of hardship, fought numerous severe engagements, and so many brave soldiers had lost their lives. He was now himself determined to repair to Spain, there to acquaint his majesty with what was going on in Mexico, and to demand justice against people who repaid all the past favours he had bestowed upon them with base ingratitude.

Cortes quitted Mexico without delay, and repaired to the township of Cojohuacan, which was his own property, where, however, he only stayed for a short time, but travelled from thence to Tezcuco, and a few days after to Tlascalla. The governor Estrada, in the meantime, began to repent of what he had done; for when his wife, Doña Marina Gutierrez de la Caballeria, a most excellent and virtuous woman, learnt that her husband had liberated the veedor and factor, and had then banished Cortes from Mexico, she was seized with sudden grief, and said to her husband, she hoped the Almighty would forgive him his

ingratitude towards a man who had befriended him in every way, and bestowed upon him so many lucrative commendaries. She advised him to do all in his power to regain his friendship, and to persuade him to return to Mexico; for otherwise his own life would be in constant danger. These circumstances are said to have made a deep impression on the governor, and he regretted exceedingly that he had banished Cortes, and liberated the factor and veedor; though they, as sworn enemies of the former, were ready to serve him in every possible manner.

About this time, also, father Don Julian Garces arrived from Spain, in order to enter upon the new bishopric of Tlascalla, of which he was appointed bishop. He was a native of Arragon, and a very eloquent preacher, and, in honour of the emperor, he took the name of Carolense. This prelate highly disapproved of Cortes' banishment, and as soon as he heard of it he determined to bring about peace and friendship between the former and the governor. With this good object in view, he repaired to Tezcuco, where he embarked in a couple of canoes, with two priests and a monk, who had accompanied him, for Mexico. As intelligence of his approach had reached this town, the whole of the clergy in grand pomp, the chief authorities, the Conquistadores, and all the officers and soldiers then in Mexico went out to meet him. Nor had he scarcely been a couple of days here before the governor begged of him to become mediator between himself and Cortes, and to persuade the latter to return to Mexico; for which purpose he then withdrew the order of banishment. The bishop, indeed, tried his utmost in this matter; but Cortes would listen to no adjustment of differences, and continually moved about from place to place, always accompanied by a considerable number of cavaliers and other persons. Cortes' principal object at the present moment was to collect as much gold as possible for his journey to Spain; for which purpose he not only mortgaged his own property, but even that of his friends who were resolved to stand by him. His example was followed by Sandoval and Tapia, who were determined to accompany him on his journey. Cortes, during his stay in Tlascalla, was likewise visited by several of the inhabitants of Mexico and of other towns, as also by all those soldiers who had not received any commendaries; even the caziques of Mexico waited upon him, and offered him their services: and as at all times there are persons fond of change and rebellion, who are most pleased when everything is in uproar and confusion, many likewise advised him to set himself up for king of New Spain, for which, they said, he could not choose a more favorable opportunity than the present, and they would lend him every support. Cortes, however, showed so little inclination to listen

to proposals of this nature, that he ordered two persons, who had made similar proposals to him, to be imprisoned, as guilty of high treason, and for a length of time made every semblance as if he intended to hang them.

A proposal of the same nature was made to him, in a letter from Mexico, by some turbulent characters of this town; though many persons were of opinion that this was merely the vile attempt of a certain party to catch some expression from Cortes which would lay him open to suspicion. But as his fidelity to the emperor was not to be shaken, he dismissed every one with indignation from his presence who durst whisper such thoughts to him, threatening to have them hung immediately if they ever again durst mention such things to him.

In the same way these rebellious spirits sought to arouse Cortes by their vile projects; they did their utmost to alarm the governor and the factor, assuring them that Cortes had not the remotest idea of leaving for Spain, but had merely spread this rumour to hide his real intentions, which were, to assemble as large a body of men as he possibly could, to fall suddenly upon them; and that the caziques of Mexico, Tezcuco, Tlascalla, and of all the townships situate on the lake, were only awaiting the word from him to commence hostilities. The governor, the factor, and the veedor were so excessively alarmed at this, that they repeatedly importuned the bishop to inquire what Cortes' real designs were; they even wrote to the latter himself, begged his pardon, and made all manner of offers to him.

The bishop, therefore, repaired to Cortes, in order to make another attempt to bring about a good understanding between all parties; but when he found how kindly he was received in every part of the province, when he found the excellent spirit which reigned among the inhabitants themselves, and was informed how indignantly Cortes had sent away those evil counsellors from his presence, he wrote word to the governor that he was the most loyal cavalier and the most faithful servant of his majesty, and that the present age could not show a second person of his worth. The governor might rest assured that Cortes positively intended to repair in person to the imperial court in Spain, and that he had no other design whatever. For the rest, continued the bishop, he could assure him that he had drawn universal odium on himself by Cortes' banishment. This letter the bishop concluded with these words: "O, señor tesorero Estrada, what a terrible affair is this, which you have so wantonly caused!"

I forget whether Cortes, before leaving for Spain, again returned to Mexico, to make the necessary arrangements for the care of his pro-

perty during his absence; I only know that he intrusted the licentiate Altamirano, Diego de Ocampo, Alonso Valiente, and Santacruz Burgales, but particularly the first mentioned, with the conduct of those matters.

Cortes had, among other things, a curious collection of the various kinds of birds found in New Spain, besides two tigers, several small jars of liquid amber, dried and fluid balsam, four expert Indian clowns, several rope-dancers, and three dwarfs of so monstrous a shape, that one could scarcely recognize the human form in them; also several Albinos of both sexes, who could scarcely see out of their eyes: all of which were objects that could not fail to create universal astonishment in Spain, and the whole of them he intended as a present to his majesty. The caziques of Tlascalla likewise begged he would take along with him three young men of the most distinguished families of their country, one of whom was the son of the old blind Xicotencatl. Besides these, several of the Mexican caziques followed in his suite.

Cortes was just about preparing for his departure, when intelligence arrived that two fast-sailing vessels had put into Vera Cruz, direct from Spain, with letters, the contents of which will be found in the following chapter.

CHAPTER CXCV.

How Cortes receives letters from the Cardinal de Siguensa, then president of the council of the Indies, and from several other cavaliers, advising him to repair to Spain without delay; the death of his father Martin Cortes; and of other matters.

Cortes was about taking his departure for Spain, when letters arrived for him from Don Garcia de Loaisa, cardinal of Siguenza, president of the council of the Indies and subsequently archbishop of Seville, and from the duke of Bejar, and other cavaliers in Spain, all of whom assured him that his enemies drew the greatest advantage from the continued postponement of his arrival in Spain, and daily brought fresh accusations against him. He was openly accused, they said, of the foulest of crimes, and of having poisoned the different governors whom his majesty had sent to New Spain. It was necessary, therefore, that he should repair immediately to the imperial court, which could not fail to produce a good effect, and all the calumnies which had been heaped upon him would recoil upon his enemies, and prove the very means of raising him to the highest honours. They at the same time

announced to him the death of his father Martin Cortes; and as he was still in mourning[50] for his wife Doña Catalina Suarez, he put on additional mourning for his father, to whose memory he in every way paid the highest honours. The different accounts which he had received caused him altogether considerable grief, and if he had previously felt a great desire to return to Spain, he felt now the more so; and as he was informed that the two vessels which had arrived in Vera Cruz were newly built, and fast sailers, he despatched his mayor-domo Pedro Ruiz de Esquival thither to purchase them. Various kinds of provisions were then collected in great abundance, of the most expensive kinds, and everything was regulated for his voyage in a manner due to so distinguished and wealthy a person. The two vessels were so plentifully provisioned, that they had sufficient victuals for a voyage of two years, although the number of people on board was much greater than ordinary.

The mayor-domo, who was to repair to Vera Cruz, had, in order to take the shortest route thither, embarked in a canoe on the lake of Mexico, for the township of Ayotzinco. This canoe, of considerable size, was manned with six Mexican rowers, and Ruiz had with him a number of gold bars, for the purchase of the vessels, and a negro slave to attend upon him. Whether he was waylaid by any one in the midst of the lake, and murdered, could never be discovered, but certain it is that neither the canoe, the rowers, nor the negro were ever seen again; only the body of Ruiz was found, four days after, on a small island of the lake, half devoured by the birds of prey. Various conjectures were made respecting the death of this man, and many persons said he had bragged too openly of the great favours which were bestowed upon him by the ladies, and that he had most likely boasted of things which never happened. Others maintained that something much worse had taken place, which, however, I will not go into here; in short, it was never known, nor was there ever much trouble taken to investigate, how this man came to his end, and we can only wish that his poor soul may rest in peace.

Cortes, on learning the untimely end of this man, despatched other officers of his household to Vera Cruz, to make the necessary preparations there for his departure, and he made it publicly known that all those who were desirous of leaving for Spain, and could obtain the governor's permission thereto, should have a free passage with him. He then departed, in company of Sandoval, Andreas de Tapia, and of several other cavaliers, for Vera Cruz, where the whole of them, after having confessed, and made the holy communion, set sail for Spain.

Cortes had so very favorable a passage, that, without touching at the Havannah or any other port, he arrived safe in forty-one days off the coast of Spain, and cast anchor near the town of Palos, opposite the church of our dear lady of Rabida. At the first sight of land every one on board fell down on his knees, and with uplighted hands offered up fervent thanks to God for this prosperous voyage. Cortes' arrival in Spain took place in the month of December of the year 1527.

During this voyage Sandoval fell dangerously ill, and Cortes' joy at his safe arrival in his native land was soon changed into excessive grief, for a few days after it pleased the Almighty to take away this our general's faithful companion in arms. Sandoval was still at Palos, and lodged in the house of a rope-maker; and here, while lying on his death-bed, he was forced patiently to behold the master of the house open one of his trunks, and take out thirteen bars of gold. This fellow had watched the favorable opportunity when Sandoval's servants had all hastened to the Rabida, to call Cortes to his dying friend, so that he was left quite alone; besides which, he was so helpless and weak, that he durst not even cry out, lest the rope-maker, who had the very countenance of a villain, should have smothered him with the cushions. The thief immediately fled with the gold bars, and escaped to Portugal, nor was he ever heard of again.

Cortes, on learning the dangerous state in which Sandoval lay, hastened to his bedside, where he learnt what I have just stated, from the latter's own mouth. Persons were immediately sent in pursuit of the thief, but it was too late, the fellow got clear away.

Sandoval's health was daily growing worse, so that at length the physicians gave up all hopes of his life, and told him his end was drawing nigh. Sandoval then confessed, and received the last sacraments with the greatest devotion. He made his last will, to which he appointed Cortes executor, set apart large sums for the poor and the cloisters, and left his sister or sisters heir to his property. I am not sure whether he had more than one sister, but I know that subsequently a sister of his married a natural son of the earl of Medellin. A short time after he had made his will Sandoval rendered up his soul into the hands of his Maker, and his death caused universal and heartfelt grief. He was buried with every imaginable pomp in the monastery of our dear lady of Rabida, and Cortes, with the whole of his suite, put on mourning for him. May God have mercy upon his soul! Amen!

The next thing Cortes did was to announce his arrival to his majesty, to the cardinal de Siguenza, the duke of Bejar, the earl of Aguilar, and to many other cavaliers of distinction. He also mentioned Sandoval's

death, and was unbounded in the praise of his excellent character, of the important services he had rendered to the crown, of his great talents as a commander, and of his personal courage. Though the monarch was greatly rejoiced at the arrival of Cortes in Spain, yet the death of Sandoval caused him much grief, as he had been duly informed of the many excellent qualities of this officer. The cardinal de Siguenza and the whole of the council of the Indies were no less grieved at his death. The duke of Bejar, the earl of Aguilar, and several other cavaliers certainly evinced no less sorrow at the death of this brave officer, yet it was soon lost in the joy they experienced at the arrival of Cortes.

The duke of Bejar and the earl of Aguilar now called upon his majesty, who had already received Cortes' letter. During this audience the former told his majesty that he himself had always been convinced of Cortes' loyalty, and that a man who had rendered the greatest services to his monarch could not fail to be equally faithful to that sovereign in all other matters; and this was sufficiently evident in the conduct of Cortes, who, placing all his reliance on a clear conscience, had fearlessly come to Spain. The duke had every reason for thus expressing himself, for during the time when various heavy accusations had been brought against Cortes, he had become responsible for him and his companions in arms with both his life and property; nor had he omitted on any occasion to extol our loyalty and our services to the skies; which at that time seemed the more meritorious, as Peru was not yet discovered. The emperor, indeed, changed his sentiments with regard to Cortes in so wonderful a degree as to issue orders that he was to be received with the highest honours in every town he passed through. The first person who gave Cortes a splendid reception was the duke of Medina Sidonia, in Seville, who supplied him with beautiful horses. Having rested in this town for a few days, Cortes hastened by long days' journeys to the convent of our dear lady of Guadaloupe, there to make his devotions. It happened fortunately for him that the distinguished lady Doña Maria de Mendoza, wife of the comendador-mayor of Leon, should arrive there at the same time. She had a number of ladies of quality in her suite; among others her sister, who was two years afterwards married to the governor of the Canary islands. Cortes was highly delighted at this circumstance, and after making his devotions to our dear lady of Guadaloupe, bestowing rich alms on the poor, and having ordered a number of masses to be said, he repaired, though in deep mourning, with the whole of his suite, and several other cavaliers, who had come to offer their services to him, to pay his respects to Doña Maria de Mendoza, her exceedingly beautiful

sister, and to the other ladies: and as Cortes was a man of excellent good breeding, of a frank and cheerful disposition, and eloquent in address, he the more easily gained the good wishes of these ladies, and the fame of his great exploits was re-echoed from one end of Spain to the other. He was possessed of sufficient wealth to bestow with an unsparing hand; and to the whole of these ladies he presented the most valuable presents in gold, trinkets of beautiful workmanship, penaches of green feathers, decorated with gold, silver, and pearls; of course, the most splendid of these presents fell to the share of the distinguished lady Maria de Mendoza and her charming sister. This latter lady he even presented with several bars of gold, to be worked into all manner of fine ornaments. Among these presents to the ladies he did not forget the most delicious perfumes and balsams: he also made his Indian buffoons and rope-dancers perform in their presence; and on learning that the last-mentioned lady had lost one of her mules, he secretly purchased two others for her, and gave them in charge of her major-domo.

Cortes remained in the town of Guadaloupe until these ladies returned to the imperial court, which, at that time, was in Toledo. He accompanied them on their journey, and gave them banquets and feasts everywhere along their route; and he so completely gained the good wishes of Doña Maria de Mendoza by his graceful behaviour, his great splendour, and the attentions he paid her, that she began seriously to think of making a match between her sister and Cortes. If the latter had not promised his hand to Doña Juana de Guzman, niece to the duke of Bejar, a match would certainly have been brought about between them; and by this alliance with the comendador-mayor of Leon he would have increased his good fortune, and have obtained from his majesty the appointment of governor of New Spain. However, I will say no more on this subject, for everything is guided and directed by the hand of God.

Doña Maria de Mendoza, in her letters to her husband, could scarcely say sufficient in praise of Cortes. All the fame of his deeds of arms, said she, were really nothing when compared to his own personal qualities: in order to appreciate his whole worth, it was necessary to listen to the charm of his conversation, learn the noble frankness of his disposition, and the grace with which his every action was accompanied. It was impossible, she continued, that his majesty could have a more devoted servant among his subjects, and she hoped her husband would fully acquaint his majesty with the great merits of this man, that he might receive the rewards which he so richly deserved.

The comendador-mayor was vastly pleased with the excellent opinion which his wife entertained of Cortes, and the attentions the latter had shown her, so that he was quite prepossessed in his favour; and as at that time no one stood on a more confidential footing with the emperor than the comendador himself, he laid his own wife's letter before the emperor, and strongly recommended Cortes to his majesty's favour. But it appears that the emperor was already most favorably inclined towards him, and had, as the duke of Bejar afterwards assured Cortes, on the first news of his arrival in Spain, expressed a great desire to make the acquaintance of the man who had rendered him so many important services, and of whose dangerous and deceitful character so much had been told him.

When Cortes arrived at the imperial court, his majesty ordered apartments to be given him in the palace. When he had approached near to the town, the duke of Bejar, the earl of Aguilar, and several other gentlemen of distinction went out to meet him, and gave him a most honorable reception. On the following day, he was allowed to throw himself at his majesty's feet; and to show him every possible distinction on the occasion, he was accompanied by the admiral of Castile, the duke of Bejar, and the comendador-mayor of Leon. After Cortes had obtained leave from his majesty to speak, he knelt down, but his majesty immediately desired him to rise; upon which Cortes addressed the emperor, and enumerated the many important services he had rendered the crown, the various conquests he had made down to the perilous expedition to the Honduras, and then recounted the disturbances and conspiracies which the veedor and factor had caused in Mexico during his absence. Though this address was of considerable length, yet he spoke everything with great fluency and ease, concluding with these words: "In order, however, not to tire your majesty's patience any longer by listening to me, and as it ill becomes a subject like myself to address the first monarch of the world to any greater length, as I am unaccustomed to speak with your majesty, and as the mental pain which I suffer from the many injustices which have been done me might force unbecoming expressions from my lips, I have drawn up in this memorial a statement of everything I wished to say, from which your majesty may learn the full particulars of every circumstance that has transpired." With these words Cortes knelt down, and handed over to his majesty the memorial, and was going to kiss his feet for having granted him so lengthened an audience, but the emperor again desired him to rise; upon which the admiral of Castile and the duke of Bejar

addressed his majesty in praise of Cortes, and said how richly he had merited reward.

The emperor then upon the spot created him marquis del Valle Oaxaca, bestowed a number of townships upon him, and presented him with the cross of the order of Santiago. The income that he was to have was not mentioned at the time, and I am unable to say how it came to be overlooked. The emperor also appointed him captain-general of New Spain and of the South sea; after which Cortes had a second audience of his majesty to thank him for the many favours he had bestowed upon him, and his majesty, as on the previous occasion, received him with every mark of distinction.

Cortes had been but a few days at Toledo when he fell so dangerously ill that every person despaired of his life. The duke of Bejar and the comendador of Leon fearing his end was drawing nigh, requested his majesty to visit the sick man at his bedside before his death, as a mark of distinction to him for the many services he had rendered to the crown. His majesty was pleased to comply with this request, and he repaired to Cortes' lodgings, accompanied by several dukes, marquisses, and other distinguished personages. This, at court, was considered the highest honour and mark of respect that could be paid to a subject. When Cortes, therefore, was restored to good health, envy strove to do its worst to poison the favour in which he stood with his majesty, under the protection of the earl of Nassau, the duke of Bejar, and the admiral of Castile.

It happened one Sunday that Cortes came rather late to mass in the cathedral church. His majesty had already taken his seat, and the noblemen of his suite, each according to his respective rank and station. Cortes, clothed in his deep mourning cloak, passed by all these illustrious noblemen, and seated himself next to the earl of Nassau, who sat very near to his majesty. This self-assumed precedence of so many illustrious personages, as it was termed, appeared so presumptuous, and showed so great a want of propriety, that those persons who considered themselves slighted thereby, immediately began to murmur forth their disapprobation of such conduct. However, the duke of Bejar, the admiral of Castile, and the earl of Aguilar, who were present, took Cortes' side, and observed that no reproach could be made to the latter on this score, as his majesty, to do him honour, had ordered that he should take his seat next to the earl of Nassau. It should also be taken into consideration, these noblemen further said, what vast territories Cortes had added to the crown, how greatly indebted the whole

of Christendom was to him; that their titles had merely descended to them from their forefathers, whereas the marks of distinction which his majesty was pleased to confer upon Cortes were the immediate consequences of the latter's own merits.

However, it is certainly true that the great favour in which Cortes stood with the emperor, the admiral of Castile, the earl of Nassau, and with the duke of Bejar, added to the title of marquis which had been conferred upon him, had turned his head a little; for he now began to neglect his other patrons, the cardinal de Siguenza, the comendador-mayor of Leon, the latter's wife Doña Maria de Mendoza, and the members of the council of the Indies, all of whom had interested themselves so greatly for him; and he exclusively courted the three noblemen above mentioned, with whose protection he imagined he could obtain anything. The first thing he did was to storm his majesty with petitions to appoint him governor of New Spain, each time enumerating the many important services he had rendered the crown, promising, should his majesty be pleased to grant his prayer, to equip an armament for a voyage of discovery to the islands and rich countries of the South seas. His distinguished patrons likewise used all their influence with his majesty to obtain this appointment for him. The emperor, however, replied, that Cortes must be satisfied with the rich marquisate he had conferred upon him, for he had now also to think of those with whose assistance Cortes had accomplished his undertakings, and who certainly deserved a reward for their exertions.

From this moment Cortes began gradually to fall in his majesty's favour. Some ascribed this to the president of the council of the Indies, cardinal de Siguenza, who had, in a consultation with his majesty, declared himself against conferring the appointment of governor on Cortes. Others ascribed it to the comendador-mayor of Leon and his wife Doña Maria de Mendoza, who felt piqued at the manner in which Cortes had latterly neglected them. However this may have been, I cannot say; but his majesty adhered to his first determination, and refused to grant Cortes his request. The emperor at this time was about to embark at Barcelona for Flanders, being accompanied by a great number of distinguished personages, and the three patrons of Cortes persevered in their endeavours to obtain the appointment in question for him, until at length his majesty forbade the earl of Nassau to speak another word about it, remarking to him at the same time that the marquisate he had conferred upon Cortes produced a larger annual income than he (the earl) obtained from his whole territory of Nassau.

We will now wish his majesty a good voyage, and say a few words respecting Cortes' marriage with Doña Juana de Zuniga. The banquets which took place on this occasion were of the most sumptuous nature, and the presents which Cortes made his bride, as I have been informed by persons who saw them, were so expensive and magnificent, that nothing in Spain had ever before been seen like them. Even the empress Isabella, it is said, expressed a wish, from the descriptions which had been given her of these presents by the jewellers, to possess similar ones, and that she had accepted with indifference several precious stones which Cortes had presented to her, because they were not equal in beauty and value to those he had given to his wife.

Cortes, upon the whole, experienced a great deal of vexation during his stay in Spain. Above all, it is said, the empress changed her previous favorable sentiments with regard to Cortes, when she learnt his ungrateful conduct towards the comendador-mayor of Leon, his wife Doña Maria, and the cardinal de Siguenza; and that he had kept back jewels of much greater value than he had presented to her. Yet she commanded the council of the Indies to promote his interests in every possible manner. An agreement was also signed between him and the crown, namely, that he should equip a couple of vessels, at his own expense for a certain number of years, for the discovery of new islands and countries in the South Sea, with the condition, however, that he should have a certain share of the profits arising therefrom.

About this time also the comendador-mayor of the order of Alcantara, Don Pedro de la Cueva, was staying at the imperial court. This was the same gentleman who was some time previously commanded by his majesty to repair with a considerable body of troops to New Spain, there to make an inquiry into the conduct of Cortes, with full power, if he found him guilty, to cut off his head. At present, however, he gave every proof of sincere joy at the distinguished title and the many favours which had been conferred upon him by the emperor, and he now daily courted the company of the marquis Don Hernando Cortes. He likewise told Cortes that he might congratulate himself on having come to Spain; for he assured him that if even he had not found him guilty of any offence, he would still have had to pay all the expenses of the armament, which would have amounted to above 300,000 pesos.

Besides all I have above related, many other things were written to us by persons who were present in Spain at the time, and by Cortes himself, but I will not go into them here; and though the latter expatiated a good deal on the many favours which had been bestowed upon

him at court, yet he never mentioned a word why he was not appointed governor of New Spain.

A few days after he had been created marquis, Cortes despatched the cavalier Juan de Herrada to Rome in his name to kiss the feet of his holiness pope Clement, and beg his acceptance of a valuable present in jewels and gold trinkets. He ordered Herrada to take along with him two Indian buffoons, and likewise wrote a lengthened epistle to his holiness, in which he gave him a full account of the countries he had discovered and subdued; of the great services he had above all rendered to God, and then to his majesty; of the idol worship practised among the Indians, and what a great number of the latter had already been converted to Christianity. What he further told his holiness I cannot say; but we learnt from Herrada, when he afterwards returned to New Spain, that Cortes had begged his holiness to remit a certain portion of the tithes.

I ought also to mention that this Juan de Herrada was an excellent soldier, and that he had accompanied us on our expedition to the Honduras. After his return from Rome he went to Peru, where Don Diego de Almagro appointed him governor to his younger son Don Diego, and otherwise placed implicit confidence in him. He likewise commanded the small but determined body of men who put the elder Pizarro to death, and afterwards became a chief officer under Almagro the younger.

At Rome, Herrada, with his fine presents and Indian buffoons, met with the best reception; and his holiness declared, during the audience which he granted him, that he could not sufficiently thank the Almighty that he lived in an age when so many extensive countries were discovered, and so many heathens converted to our holy religion. He said that Cortes and his troops had rendered the greatest services to God, to our master the emperor Don Carlos, and to the whole of Christendom, and we were deserving of the highest rewards. His holiness even ordered a solemn procession and a day of thanksgiving, and sent especial bulls, by which he granted us absolution of our sins, and gave other indulgences to the cloisters and churches. He likewise confirmed and approved of everything Cortes had done in New Spain, only he refused to grant the latter's request with respect to the tithes.

This is all I know of the contents of the letter which his holiness wrote to Cortes; but everything I have above related of this mission to Rome I learnt from Herrada himself and from another soldier who had accompanied him named Campo. They staid altogether eight days at Rome, and his holiness, with the cardinals, were highly de-

lighted with the performances of the Indian buffoons. His holiness even created Herrada a count palatine, presented him with a large sum of money for his journey back, and gave him a letter to our emperor, in which he requested his majesty to bestow upon him some lucrative commendary; but as Cortes, on his return to New Spain, had no longer the power to distribute lands or Indians, Herrada never derived any benefit from the pope's letter, and he repaired to Peru, where he made a brilliant career.

CHAPTER CXCVI.

How the royal court of audience arrive in Mexico during Cortes' stay in Spain, and what their first occupations were.

WHILE Cortes was staying in Spain, and had already been created a marquis, the royal court of audience appointed by his majesty arrived in Mexico. This court consisted of a president, Nuño de Guzman, who was previously governor of Panuco, and of four licentiates as auditors, whose names were Matienzo of Biscay or Navarra, Delgadillo of Granada, Maldonado of Salamanca, (not the licentiate Alonso Maldonado the Good, who was governor of Guatimala,) and the licentiate Parada, who, up to this moment, had lived at Cuba.

These gentlemen met with a most splendid reception in Mexico, and commenced their operations about sixteen days after their arrival. None of the subsequent viceroys or presidents possessed the extensive powers granted to these men by his majesty. They had full power to distribute the commendaries in perpetuity, and they were particularly desired to reward the Conquistadores handsomely, and to give them the preference in all matters.

These gentlemen made known their arrival in every town throughout New Spain, and ordered the citizens to send their procuradores to them, each provided with a list of the Indians in his province. Many days had not elapsed before these procuradores and the Conquistadores made their appearance in Mexico from all parts of New Spain. I myself repaired thither as procurador syndic of the town of Guacasualco, but when I found in what manner the auditors intended to treat the matter, I hastened back to Guacasualco in order to elect the procuradores who were to represent the interests of the latter place at the royal court of audience, during the distribution of the commendaries in perpetuity. Various disputes arose respecting this election, for every one was de-

sirous of choosing his particular friend; however, at length their choice fell upon Luis Marin and myself; but when we arrived in Mexico and the whole of us procuradores insisted upon a distribution in perpetuity as his majesty had commanded, we found that a great change had taken place. Nuño de Guzman, Matienzo, and Delgadillo were now quite against this measure; and the two other auditors, Maldonado and Parada, died of pleurisy shortly after their arrival in Mexico, and no doubt if Cortes had been at that time in New Spain calumny would have accused him of their death also. With respect to the distribution in perpetuity, I have been assured by many credible persons that the factor was the only man who stopped it from being carried into effect, for he had so far gained the confidence of Guzman and Delgadillo, that they never did anything without consulting him, and allowed themselves to be led blindly by him in all matters. These gentlemen now opposed the distribution in perpetuity, because they saw that the Conquistadores by such a measure would become independent of them, and trouble themselves no more about them. They consequently considered it more to their interest to leave matters as they were, for then they could bestow and take away Indians whenever they liked, by which they would always have us at their mercy, and they themselves derive great power and riches. The factor, Delgadillo, and Guzman likewise came to a secret understanding with each other, that the first-mentioned gentleman should repair to Spain in order to procure for Guzman the appointment of governor of New Spain; for they had already learnt that Cortes did not stand so high in his majesty's favour as at first, and that, notwithstanding all his great interest at court, he had not been able to obtain this appointment for himself. The factor accordingly embarked for Spain, but he had not been many days at sea before he was overtaken by a violent storm, and his vessel was wrecked off the coast of Guacasualco; the factor narrowly escaped on shore in the boat, and here this project ended.

The first thing which Nuño de Guzman and his colleagues did was to institute an inquiry into the government of the treasurer Estrada, to which he very patiently submitted. If this man had shown the determined character we had expected of him, he would certainly have continued governor of New Spain, for it was only a few months previously that his majesty had conferred this appointment on him, with every approbation of the conduct he had pursued in the government of the country; besides which, Guzman had no further powers than those conferred upon him as president of the royal court of audience, and even then he could not make any distribution of lands or of

Indians, unless it met with the approbation of his colleagues. Every inhabitant of Mexico, and the whole of the Conquistadores would have the more zealously supported Estrada if he had shown any determination to maintain his authority, as he had evinced the utmost impartiality in his government, and had scrupulously acted up to the commands of his majesty; but the inquiry had scarcely lasted a few days when he grew weary of offering any further resistance to the court of audience, and he died shortly after of downright vexation.

This new court of audience was altogether opposed to Cortes and his adherents, in which partisan-like spirit they instituted an inquiry into the conduct of Jorge de Alvarado, in his government of Guatimala, and for this purpose a certain Orduña, the elder, of Tordesillas, was despatched thither; but I am totally ignorant of the result of his investigation. In the same way they attacked the government of Cortes, and specially appointed for this purpose the fiscal and the factor Salazar. During this investigation, Cortes was accused in open court of so many base actions, and was altogether so grossly calumniated, that the licentiate Altamirano, to whom Cortes had intrusted the sole care of his possessions in New Spain, with cap in hand, stepped up in front of the president and the auditors, and respectfully begged of them to bridle the slanderous tongue of the factor, and to forbid him henceforth to utter his low abuse of the marquis, a cavalier of unblemished character, and the faithful servant of his monarch. He then demanded justice of the factor, but very little notice was taken of his remonstrances, for the next day the factor produced even more infamous accusations, and the auditors countenanced this in so far that very high words arose between the licentiate Altamirano on one side, and the factor and the auditors on the other. At length Altamirano lost all patience, drew his dagger, and would certainly have killed the factor on the spot if he had not flown for protection behind the auditors. The whole city broke out into open insurrection at this circumstance. Altamirano was thrown into prison, and the factor was confined in his own house. The whole of us Conquistadores, however, went in a body to the president and interceded for Altamirano, so effectually, indeed, that three days after, he was set at liberty again, and a reconciliation was brought about between him and the auditors.

After this affair had blown over, another of a more serious nature took place; namely, there arrived about this time in Mexico a relation of Pamfilo Narvaez, named Zavallos, who had been despatched from Cuba by Maria de Valenzuela, Narvaez's wife, to gain some information respecting her husband, who had been appointed governor of the

country on the river Palmas; but, as was currently reported, had perished on the expedition thither. Maria de Valenzuela had also given Zavallos full authority to take possession of her husband's property wherever he might find it, for she imagined he had taken considerable property with him to New Spain. This man was secretly advised by the auditors to bring actions against all those of the Conquistadores who had accompanied Cortes on the expedition against Narvaez, injured his person, burnt his property, and killed so many of his men. Zavallos immediately lent a willing ear to this, and forthwith commenced an action of indemnification against the Conquistadores, who all happened at that time to be staying in the metropolis. There were altogether 250 of us, and the whole were condemned in the sum of a certain number of pesos, and banished to the distance of twenty miles from Mexico. But this sentence of banishment was instantly withdrawn, and several of us were not even asked for the fine in which we had been condemned, for it was very small. But this was not all, for now other enemies of Cortes began to show themselves, and accused him of having kept to himself a quantity of the gold, silver and jewels taken at the conquest of the city of Mexico; that he had even concealed the treasure of Quauhtemoctzin, and merely given the Conquistadores eighty pesos a piece; that he had only sent a very small portion of this treasure to his majesty, and that in such a manner as if the present had come from him alone. Though these complainants very well knew that the present which Cortes sent on that occasion to Spain fell into the hands of the French freebooter, Jean Florin, yet they not only demanded that Cortes should repay the money captured by this corsair, but also the other treasures which he had secretly kept to himself.

Various other accusations were brought against Cortes, and in every case judgment was given in favour of the complainants, so that his possessions were sold in payment of all demands. The auditors even went so far as to contrive that Cortes' own brother-in-law, Juan Suarez, should accuse Cortes, in open court, of the murder of his late wife, Doña Catalina Suarez, which he sought to prove by witnesses.

With regard to the demands against Cortes respecting the prize-money of Mexico and the treasure of Quauhtemoctzin, we, the friends of Cortes, after obtaining leave of the alcaldes, assembled in the house of Garcia Holguin, and signed our names to a paper, in which we declared that we would not accept of any share of the fines in which Cortes had been condemned, and that we had altogether no demand whatever of that nature against him, as we were perfectly satisfied

that the gold, with the other valuable matters in question, had been duly forwarded to his majesty, and that this was done with unanimous consent to prove our fidelity and loyalty to the emperor. When the auditors were informed of what we had done, they were going to have us all seized, on the ground that we were not authorized to call any meeting or sign any document of such a nature without their sanction; but we showed them the permission we had received from the alcaldes, yet the auditors again sentenced us to be banished twenty miles from Mexico. This sentence was soon after indeed withdrawn as on the former occasion, but it nevertheless caused us a great deal of vexation and sorrow.

The next thing the auditors did was to announce to the public that all those persons who either descended from the Moors or the Indians, whose relations or forefathers in the fourth degree had been burnt by the holy inquisition, or had even been dismissed with the San Benito, should leave New Spain within the space of six months, or forfeit the half of their property. Many persons were accordingly called up to vindicate themselves on this point, and several found their respectability sadly impugned; yet there were only two persons who were obliged to leave New Spain on this account.

With regard to the distribution of commendaries, the auditors fully acted up to his majesty's commands, and they richly remunerated the true Conquistadores; but the real cause of their downfal was the immoderateness with which they allowed the Spaniards to mark slaves. This was carried to so great a length in the province of Panuco, that the whole of this territory became at length quite depopulated. Nuño de Guzman had, altogether, something noble and frank about him, and when he gave, it was with an unsparing hand. For instance, by way of a new-year's gift he presented the accountant Albornoz with the township of Guazpaltepec. Albornoz had just returned from Spain; with his wife Doña Catalina de Loaisa, whom he had recently married, having also obtained permission from his majesty to erect a sugar refinery at Sempoalla, which a few years after was completely destroyed. If the president Guzman pursued a ruthless course in the marking of slaves, and tried all he could to injure Cortes, the auditor Delgadillo was certainly no better. It was even said of him that he made grants of commendaries in consideration of a certain per centage on their annual produce. Besides this, he appointed his own brother Berrio alcalde-mayor of the town of Guaxaca, where he oppressed and ill used the inhabitants in every possible manner to obtain gold. This auditor likewise despatched a person of his own name as commandant to the

township of the Zapotecs, whose conduct was equally infamous there as that of Berrio in Guaxaca. The other auditor, Matienzo, was a man far advanced in years, and the only one who had not abused his power; but against the others so many bitter complaints were made, and these so well confirmed by letters from the monks and prelates, that the emperor ordered the council of the Indies immediately to recall all the members of the royal audience, to severely punish them, and to appoint other men of integrity and intelligence. His majesty also desired that an inquiry should be made as to the number of slaves which had been marked in the province of Panuco. Matienzo was commissioned to make the inquiry, as this aged auditor had shown greater love of justice than his colleagues.

From this moment all the permits which had been given to mark slaves were considered as invalid, and the marking-irons were destroyed wherever they were found, and henceforth it was forbidden ever again to mark slaves. It was even ordered that a census should be taken of all the slaves in New Spain, in order to prevent their being sold out of the country, or even from being sent from one province into another. In the same way it was declared that every distribution of commendaries made by Guzman and his colleagues to their friends, relations, and other persons of no worth, should be considered as invalid, and the property these persons had obtained in this manner was immediately to be delivered up again.

These commands produced endless lawsuits, for those in possession employed every artifice to retain what they had once got. Some maintained they belonged to the body of the Conquistadores, though there was not a word of truth in it; others asserted that they had been settled in the country for many years. Some, who could offer no good excuse, asserted, at least, that they never belonged to the household, or to the table companions of the auditors; declaring that they had only called upon these gentlemen from time to time, and appeared in their suite, to pay them the respect which was due to them in their capacity of royal auditors. In short, each person defended his property as well as he could, and, upon the whole, so successfully, that there were only a few persons who were obliged to relinquish their possessions. The accountant Albornoz was of this number, and he was again deprived of the township of Guazpaltepec, which Guzman had given him as a new-year's gift. In the same way a certain Villa Roël was obliged to deliver up possession of the township of Quauhnahuac. Villegas, Guzman's mayor-domo, and other officials and relatives of the auditors, had to quit their commendaries.

As soon as the news arrived in Mexico that the auditors were to be cashiered, Guzman and his colleagues determined to despatch a procurador to Spain, to testify that they had faithfully fulfilled the duties of their office, and acted up to his majesty's commands. For this purpose, all the procuradores of the different towns of New Spain then staying at Mexico, and the most distinguished of the Conquistadores, were desired to assemble in the principal church, to elect the factor Salazar, when it would be made to appear as if this man was chosen by our unanimous consent to repair to Spain, and there to whitewash Guzman and his colleagues. The auditors had fully expected we should have elected Salazar, particularly as they had been so liberal in their grants of commendaries to the Conquistadores.

This meeting actually took place, but so many persons forced their way into the church who had no voice at all, creating so much disturbance and noise, that it was impossible to restore order. We therefore declared to the auditors that it was impossible to proceed with the business of the day, and that we would assemble in their private dwelling on the following morning. But as we plainly saw that their main object was that we should select some one entirely devoted to their interests, we determined also that a second agent should be chosen in Cortes' interest. We then proceeded to the election, and our choice fell upon Bernardino Vazquez de Tapia, in the latter's interest, and Antonio de Carvajal, who commanded a brigantine during the siege of Mexico, was chosen to represent the interest of the auditors; however, both these gentlemen were more inclined to favour the cause of Nuño de Guzman than that of Cortes: nor could we indeed blame them for this, the royal auditors having been more bountiful towards us than Cortes. They had, at least, in some measure acted up to his majesty's commands, by bestowing commendaries upon us; whereas Cortes, at the time when he had full power to reward us according to our deserts, totally neglected us. But as Spaniards are ever loyal, and we could not forget that he had been our captain, we still felt a great affection for him, more indeed than he had shown us when it was in his power to have remembered us, according to his majesty's express desire.

After we had thus selected our two procuradores, a lengthened discussion took place as to the particular points that were to be impressed on his majesty's mind. The president and his colleagues, on their part, maintained that it was imperative on all the procuradores to declare that it would be both injurious to the cause of religion and the true interests of the crown if Cortes returned to New Spain, for his presence would only create factions and disturbances among the inhabitants, and

a good government would be totally impracticable; that moreover it was not unlikely he would seize the first opportunity of taking forcible possession of the country, and declare his independence of the Spanish crown. These assertions most of us Conquistadores positively denied, and we maintained that his majesty had not a more devoted and faithful servant than Cortes.

About this time also Alvarado returned from Spain, as governor and chief justice of Guatimala, and comendador of Santiago. He was accompanied by his newly-married wife, Doña Francisca de la Cueva, who, however, died soon after her arrival at Vera Cruz, so that Alvarado and his suite arrived in Mexico clad in the deepest mourning. As soon as he learnt the nature of the petition which the auditors were going to despatch to his majesty, he managed that we should draw up a joint address to the emperor, in which we fully explained to his majesty the real object the president and his colleagues had in view. When therefore the two above-mentioned procuradores laid their papers before the council of the Indies, the members of this body readily perceived that they contained nothing but a rancorous feeling against Cortes. Not the slightest notice therefore was taken of these representations, and the imperial decree for the cashiering of the auditors was confirmed. Cortes was at that time still in Spain, and it may naturally be supposed that all these attempts to injure him turned out to his advantage, and added to his honour.

Nuño de Guzman in the meantime sent out an expedition to Xalisco for the colonization of this province, in which, it will be seen, he was more fortunate than Cortes, who had previously made a similar attempt.

CHAPTER CXCVII.

How Nuño de Guzman, on the intelligence that the emperor had cashiered the royal court of audience, determines to subdue the province of Xalisco, at present called New Galicia.

Nuno de Guzman, finding that his power in New Spain was drawing to an end, assembled a large body of troops, consisting of cavaliers, crossbow-men, and musketeers, for an expedition to the province of Xalisco. Those who were not willing to accompany him he compelled, or made them give a certain sum of money to hire a substitute. He seized every horse he could lay his hands on, and at most only paid half their value. The more wealthy inhabitants of the metropolis were

obliged to contribute as much money as they could spare, and a large number of Indian auxiliary troops and porters were joined to the expedition.

Guzman's troops everywhere committed terrible depredations. The first province he marched through was Mechoacan, the inhabitants of which still possessed abundance of gold, though not of the finest quality, as it contained a considerable alloy of silver, for which reason Guzman compelled them to contribute a larger amount. Casonci, the principal cazique of the province, boldly refused to give him so great a quantity of gold as he demanded, wherefore Guzman ordered him to be tortured, by pouring hot oil over his feet; but as the unfortunate cazique, notwithstanding all the torments he endured, still remained firm to his purpose, he was ordered to be hung. This was the most cruel and wicked deed the president ever perpetrated, and he himself was the only guilty person, for the whole of his men expressed their horror at this inhuman act. Out of this province he took with him a great number of Indians, to transport his baggage to the spot where he built the present town of Compostella; which, however, cost the imperial treasury a vast sum of money, besides the heavy contributions he levied on the inhabitants of Mexico, a number of whom he compelled to settle in the new town. As I did not accompany this expedition, I will not go into its particulars; but I know well that neither Cortes nor Nuño de Guzman drew any advantages from it, and that the latter remained in the province of Xalisco until his majesty issued orders for him to be seized, and brought back a prisoner to Mexico, at Guzman's own expense, there to render an account of his government to the new court of audience which his majesty had appointed. It was at the particular request of Matienzo and of Delgadillo that these steps were taken against him. We will now, however, leave him to his own fate, and see who the new members of the royal court of audience were.

CHAPTER CXCVIII.

The arrival of the new members of the royal court of audience in Mexico.

I HAVE above mentioned the orders which his majesty issued with respect to the formation of a new court of audience, which was solely composed of men of intelligence and strict justice, and choice was made of the following persons: Don Sebastian Fuen Leal, as president, who

at that time was bishop of St. Domingo; auditors, the licentiate Maldonada, of Salamanca; Francisco de Cainos, of Toro or of Zamora; Vasco de Quiroga, of Madrigal, subsequently bishop of Mechoacan; and Salmeron, of Madrid. The auditors arrived in Mexico before the president, and they, as well as the latter, who came a few days after, were received with great splendour.

These gentlemen immediately instituted a general inquiry into the government of the late auditors. Numbers of the inhabitants, with the procuradores from every town of New Spain, besides several Indian chiefs, repaired without delay to Mexico, and brought such a mass of accusations against the late auditors, of oppression, extortion, and of injustice, that the present auditors were utterly astounded. Cortes' agents also complained of the illegal manner in which Nuño de Guzman and his colleagues had seized part of the former's property, and sold it by public auction to the highest bidder. The agents then claimed damages to the amount of 200,000 pesos. As Nuño de Guzman refused to appear in Mexico at the summons of the auditors, obstinately refusing to leave the province of Xalisco, Delgadillo and Matienzo had alone to answer all these accusations; they, however, threw all the guilt on the shoulders of Guzman, who, in his capacity of president, they said, had acted on his own authority, and therefore was the only responsible person.

As Guzman refused to appear before the auditors, all they could do for the present was to forward his majesty an account of the state of affairs in New Spain; for they feared, by employing open force, to create insurrection throughout the country. The council of the Indies, on receiving this information, despatched to Mexico the licentiate de la Torre, with orders to repair in person to the province of Xalisco, there to institute an inquiry against Guzman, and to take him prisoner to Mexico. This licentiate was also commissioned to see that Guzman repaid us the money he had obliged us to pay to the wife of Narvaez, as an indemnification for the losses the latter sustained in our expedition against him.

The auditors in the meantime continued their investigations, and first of all ordered the possessions of Delgadillo and of Matienzo to be sold, to pay the demands which were made against them; and as the moneys arising from the sale of their property was not sufficient to satisfy these, they were to be imprisoned. In like manner they served Berrio, the brother of Delgadillo, who, in his capacity of alcalde-mayor of Guaxaca, had thought proper to exercise every species of oppression. The whole of his property was sold, and he himself thrown into prison,

where he died some time after. Another of Delgadillo's relatives, alcalde-mayor of the country of the Zatopecs, shared a similar fate.

The new auditors were altogether strictly honest and just in their proceedings; they were, indeed, men whose only aim was to serve God, and to watch the true interests of the crown. They were unwearied in their labours to promote the happiness of the Indian population, made the best regulations for their being instructed in the doctrine of our holy faith, and abolished all further marking of slaves.

As two of the auditors, Salmeron and Cainos, were far advanced in age, they begged permission of his majesty, after a stay of four years in Mexico, to return to Spain, there to spend the large fortunes which they had honestly gained, in peace and retirement. His majesty, being satisfactorily convinced of the excellent conduct they had pursued in their government, readily granted their request. The emperor at the same time also recalled the president Don Sebastian, to learn from him the true state of affairs in New Spain, and soon after appointed him president of the supreme court of justice at Granada. From this place he was some time after removed to Valladolid, made bishop of Tui, soon after bishop of Leon, and then bishop of Cuenca; so that one episcopal appointment followed the other in quick succession, all of which he obtained by the strict justice he observed in all matters that came before him. After this last promotion death called him away, and it appears to me, according to our holy faith, that he is clothed with the glory of the blessed in heaven. During the stay of this excellent man in Mexico I had often occasion to confer personally with him, and I at all times found him a man of excellent disposition, whose love of justice knew no bounds. The same kindness of heart he had shown as bishop of St. Domingo, and previously as inquisitor at Seville.

The licentiate Alonso Maldonado, whom his majesty appointed president and governor of the provinces of Guatimala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, likewise possessed every good quality, and was subsequently appointed governor of Yucatan jointly with his father-in-law Don Francisco de Montejo.

The licentiate Quiroga also possessed similar virtues, and was afterwards made bishop of Mechoacan. Thus were these excellent men rewarded for their virtues; while Delgadillo and Matienzo returned poor and despised to Spain, where they died a couple of years after in obscurity.

About this time it pleased his majesty to appoint a viceroy of New Spain, in the person of the illustrious and excellent cavalier Don Antonio de Mendoza, whose memory will be honoured to eternity. The viceroy

brought with him, as the new auditors, the doctor Quesada, of Ledesma, and the licentiate Tejada, of Logroño. As the auditor Maldonado shortly after left for the province of Guatimala, another person was appointed in his place, named Loaisa, of Ciudad Real. He was a man advanced in age, and, after staying a few years in Mexico, he returned with a handsome fortune to Spain. After him the licentiate Santillana, of Seville, was appointed an auditor, and the whole of these men observed the strictest justice in their conduct. Their entry into Mexico was uncommonly splendid, and they immediately announced to the public that all those persons who had any complaints to make against the late members of the court of audience should forthwith produce them. However, not a single person came forward to offer any, and their government was pronounced irreproachable.

The first thing which the viceroy did on his arrival in Mexico was to try if he could not induce Nuño de Guzman to come to terms, without using open force. For this purpose he invited him to Mexico; and when he had arrived there, he gave him lodgings in his own palace, treated him with every possible respect, and allowed him to dine every day at his own table. While Guzman was staying here, the licentiate De la Torre arrived, who was commissioned by his majesty to take Guzman prisoner, and, after communicating with the viceroy, to bring him to trial. The licentiate De la Torre finding, however, that the viceroy was very unwilling to assist him in this matter, repaired in person to his palace, seized the person of Guzman, and threw him into prison, where he remained for several days, until he was set at liberty again by the viceroy.

When the disaffected portion of the inhabitants of Mexico found that the licentiate De la Torre was determined to make the minutest inquiry into the late conduct of Guzman, if they could do nothing else, they at least resolved to injure his good name, for which the licentiate's gambling propensity gave them the best opportunity. At that time it was the fashion (particularly for those persons who practised in the law courts) to wear a kind of loose coat with very wide sleeves. In one of the sleeves of such a coat belonging to the licentiate, one of Guzman's partisans ingeniously managed to fasten a small pack of cards in such a manner that they should not fall out immediately. When the licentiate, accompanied by several distinguished personages, was walking across the large square at Mexico, the person who had concealed the cards so contrived it that they dropped one after the other out of his sleeve on the ground, so as to mark his way as he went along. At length this was observed by those who accompanied him,

and they drew his attention to what was falling from his coat. This malicious piece of frolic, as may be imagined, annoyed the licentiate excessively, and he exclaimed, "It appears to me that the people here are not exactly pleased with the impartial justice I exercise; however, if I live, his majesty shall certainly be made acquainted with the insult which has thus been offered to me."

A few days after this trick had been played off upon him, he actually fell ill from downright vexation, and died.

CHAPTER CXCIX.

Cortes returns to New Spain as marquis del Valle Oaxaca, and captain general of New Spain and of the South Sea, accompanied by his wife Doña Maria de Zuniga, and father Leguizamo and other monks.

CORTES having now been so long absent in Spain, and having married a second wife, was very desirous of returning to New Spain, in order to take the management of his property into his own hands again, and enter into possession of the marquisate which the emperor had bestowed upon him. As he was well aware how matters stood in Mexico, he hastened his departure, and embarked with his whole household and twelve monks of the order of Charity, who were to continue the good work of conversion commenced by father Olmedo and by several other pious men mentioned in former chapters. The general of this order again selected for Cortes virtuous and excellent men, at the head of whom he placed father Juan de Leguizamo, of Biscay, a man of great learning and piety, and who was the confessor both of Cortes and his wife.

Cortes this time again had a very favorable passage; but, unfortunately, one of the monks died a few days after his arrival in Vera Cruz. In this town Cortes was received with every mark of respect, but not with the former splendour. From Vera Cruz he travelled to some of the townships belonging to his marquisate, and thence to Mexico, in order to have himself proclaimed captain-general of New Spain and of the South Sea, and to desire the viceroy and the royal auditors to count out to him the number of his subjects according to his own views. The emperor, when granting him the marquisate, had stated how many inhabitants it was to contain, but I cannot remember the exact number. However, I know it came to a lawsuit; for when Cortes begged of his majesty to bestow these Indians on him, he counted one whole house-

hold, including the sons, sons-in-law, and servants, as one person. But the royal court of audience explained this in a very different manner; for doctor Quesada, one of the auditors, being commissioned to make the enumeration, counted all the full-grown members of a family separately, reckoning the slaves and servants in a similar manner. In this way one house often contained from ten to fifteen subjects; instead of which, Cortes said that each house must only be considered as one individual, and maintained that his majesty fully intended, when he presented him with the several townships, that the number of inhabitants should be the number of houses. This matter involved him in lawsuits, and he became at variance both with the viceroy and the auditors, who then laid the matter before his majesty, but no decision was come to for several years, during which time the marquis continued to levy his tribute according to his own views.

Cortes, on his arrival in New Spain, staid but very few days at Mexico, and took up his permanent abode with his wife in the town of Quauhnahuac, which also belonged to his marquisate. He now occupied himself in fitting out the armament according to his agreement with the empress Isabella, of glorious memory, and with the council of the Indies, for discoveries in the South Sea. This armament he fitted out in the town of Teguantepec, which at that time formed part of his marquisate, and in the harbours of Zacatula and Acapulco.

How this expedition terminated I will relate in the following chapter, from which will be seen that Cortes' undertakings were no longer attended with success.

CHAPTER CC.

Of the vast expenses to which the marquis Hernando Cortes put himself in fitting out the expeditions to the South Sea, and of their unfortunate termination.

The marquis Del Valle had, previous to his departure for Spain, during the government of Marcos de Aguilar, built two vessels, on board of which he put 250 men, all well armed, and a number of excellent sailors. The command of these vessels he gave to a cavalier named Alvarado de Saavedra, and they were abundantly victualled for one year, besides carrying a large quantity of goods for barter.

Saavedra was instructed to shape his course to the Moluccas, or towards China, and the main object was to discover some direct route

from the Spanish possessions to the Spice islands. This expedition was undertaken at his majesty's express desire in a letter to Cortes, dated Granada, the 22d of June, 1526. I am particular in mentioning these circumstances, because Cortes showed this letter to me and other of the Conquistadores who were about him at the time. In this letter the emperor also ordered that Cortes' armament should go in search of another more extensive one which had set sail direct from Spain for China, and was commanded by Don Garcia de Loaysa, comendador of the order of St. John.

When Saavedra was about to set sail, a small vessel arrived off the coast of Guantepec, belonging to the squadron under Loaysa. The captain of this vessel, whose name was Ortuño de Lango, gave Saavedra a full account of the fate of Loaysa's expedition, and explained to him in what direction he was to sail. Saavedra then persuaded the pilot and a couple of Ortuño's sailors to join him, and set sail, after attending mass, in the month of December, 1527, from Ciguatepec, lying in the province of Colima or Zacatula. This armament, indeed, reached the Moluccas, and visited several other islands, but suffered dreadfully from heavy tempests, hunger, and disease, and many of the men died. One of the sailors who accompanied this expedition I saw three years after at Mexico, and he told me marvellous things of the towns and islands which Saavedra had visited. If my memory is correct, (for many years have since elapsed,) Saavedra, with all his men, were taken prisoners by the Portuguese there, and transported to Spain, or brought back thither at his majesty's request.

After this first armament had departed, Cortes fitted out two more vessels with eighty musketeers and crossbow-men. The command of these vessels he gave to a certain Diego Hurtado Mendoza, who set sail from Acapulco in the month of May, 1532, for the discovery of islands and new countries. The captain Hurtado, however, did nothing of all this, and durst not even venture far out at sea, so that the greater part of his men at length grew wearied of sailing about to no purpose, refused all further obedience to him, and deserted with one of the vessels; though these men afterwards positively declared that the two vessels parted with the captain's consent, who granted them permission to return with one of the vessels to Spain: but this account cannot be credited, and the men no doubt took forcible possession of the vessel. However, they had not been separated long before the vessel was cast on shore by a severe storm, and, after undergoing many fatigues, the crew arrived at Xalisco, whence the news of their misfortune speedily reached Mexico. Hurtado, in the meantime, continued

to sail along the coast, but all at once his vessel disappeared, nor was she or any of those on board ever after heard of.

Cortes was excessively grieved at this loss, yet it did not deter him from fitting out other armaments for the same purpose. He had already built two more vessels at his own expense, which were lying in the harbour of Guantepec, and were manned with seventy soldiers. The command of one of these vessels he gave to a cavalier named Diego Bezerra de Mendoza, and captain Hernando de Grijalva he appointed to the other, though Bezerra had the chief command of both. Ortuña Ximenes, of Biscay, a great cosmographer, accompanied this expedition as chief pilot. Bezerra's instructions were to go in quest of Hurtado; but if he should not fall in with him, he was to steer at a venture for the main ocean in search of islands and new countries; for it was said there were many islands in the South Sea which produced immense quantities of pearls. The chief pilot Ximenes was so confident of the good success of this expedition that he promised the men on board he would steer them to countries where they would all become rich, and many there were who firmly believed what he said.

These expectations, however, vanished with the very first night after the vessels had left the harbour of Guantepec, for a contrary wind arose, which parted the two vessels, and they never joined again. Very favorable weather indeed soon returned, and the vessels might easily have fallen in with each other again if Grijalva had not made direct for the main ocean in order to evade the superior command of Bezerra, who was a haughty and ill-disposed man. Grijalva sailed on to the distance of above 800 miles, and discovered an unknown island, to which he gave the name of St. Thomas. Bezerra with his vessel had likewise continued to sail forward, but he soon fell out with the chief pilot Ximenes, who, with his countrymen of Biscay and a greater part of the troops fell upon Bezerra in the night, and put him to death, with several of the soldiers; even greater loss of life would have ensued if two Franciscan monks who were on board had not interfered, and persuaded Ximenes and the other conspirators to put them on shore on the coast of Xalisco with several of the men who were wounded in the scuffle. Ximenes now continued his course, and came to an island which he named Santa Cruz, where, according to all accounts, there were fine pearl fisheries. This island was inhabited by a savage tribe of Indians, and they massacred Ximenes with the whole of the men who had accompanied him on shore to take in fresh water. The few sailors who had remained on board put back with the vessel to the harbour of Xalisco, where they related all that had taken place and spread a vast

account of the large population and the rich pearl fisheries of the island they had discovered. These accounts soon reached Mexico, and as may be imagined, were anything but pleasing to Cortes; but as he was a man whose spirits were not easily damped by adversity, he determined in future not to trust similar expeditions to other hands, but to take the chief command himself. By this time three other fine vessels were lying in readiness at Guantepec, with which he proposed to sail out in person, for he felt a great temptation to visit the above-mentioned pearl island, besides that he fully believed there were other large continents to be discovered in the South Sea.

As soon as it was known in New Spain that Cortes was going to head the expedition in person, no one any longer doubted of its good success, and of the riches it would produce those who joined it; and so many cavaliers, musketeers, and crossbow-men offered their services, that their number soon amounted to above 380 men, among whom were thirty married men, accompanied by their wives.

These vessels were provided with a copious supply of the best of provisions, with all kinds of ammunition, and tools of various descriptions. The most experienced pilots and sailors were hired, who, with the troops, received instructions to repair by a certain route to the harbour of Guantepec, while Cortes, with Andreas de Tapia, several other officers, a few priests, surgeons, physicians, and an apothecary, travelled thither by another road. When he arrived at the harbour above mentioned he found the three vessels in readiness, and immediately set sail with the first body of troops for the bay or island of Santa Cruz, where he landed safely in the month of May, 1535.[51] The three vessels then put back for Guantepec to fetch the ladies and the rest of the men who had remained behind under the command of Tapia. This time, however, the passage was not so favorable, for the vessels were driven out of their course by a violent wind into the mouth of a wide river, to which they gave the name of St. Peter and St. Paul. The vessels, on leaving this river, to get into their right course again, were overtaken by another storm, and they became separated from each other. There was only one which reached the harbour of Santa Cruz; the second was cast on shore off Xalisco, the men on board narrowly escaping a watery grave, and becoming wearied of the perils of the sea, they dispersed themselves through New Spain, only a few remaining in the province of Xalisco; the third vessel ran into a bay, to which the men gave the name of the bay of Guajava, on account of the numbers of Guajava trees they saw growing there.[52] But this vessel likewise ran aground, nor were the hands on board able to set her afloat again.

Cortes in the meantime was impatiently awaiting the arrival of these vessels, particularly as all his provisions were consumed, for the greater part of the biscuits and salted meat was on board the vessel which had got ashore off Xalisco. As the inhabitants of Santa Cruz are perfect savages, and neither grow maise nor in anywise till the ground, but merely live on wild fruits, fish, and animals, there arose so dreadful a famine among Cortes' troops, that twenty-three of the men died of hunger and disease. The greater part of the remaining troops likewise suffered from ill-health, and they threw out bitter curses against Cortes, the island, and the whole voyage of discovery.

Cortes, determining, if possible, to put an end to their distress, ran out with the vessel which had arrived in search of the two others, taking with him fifty men, two smiths, and several shipwrights. On arriving off Xalisco he found one of them lying on a sand-bank, quite deserted, and the other he discovered jammed between the coral rocks. By dint of the utmost exertions he succeeded in setting them afloat again; and, after the carpenters had properly repaired them, he arrived safely with the two vessels and their cargoes at Santa Cruz. Those of the troops who had not tasted any nourishing food for so long a time ate so ravenously of the salted meat that half of them died of a violent dysentery.

In order not to witness this scene of misery any longer, Cortes again set sail from Santa Cruz, and discovered the coast of California. Cortes himself was in very bad health about this time, and he would gladly have returned to New Spain but he feared the slanderous tongues of his enemies, who would be sure to make their observations respecting the large sums of money he expended in the discovery of countries which held out no advantage; besides, he could not brook the idea that people should say, all his present undertakings were failures, and that this was owing to the curses which the veteran Conquistadores of New Spain had heaped upon him.

During the whole of this time the marchioness Del Valle had heard no tidings of her husband, and as information had been received that a vessel had been wrecked off the coast of Xalisco, she became excessively low-spirited, and felt almost sure that her husband had been lost at sea. In order, however, if possible, to gain some certain information respecting her husband's fate, she sent out two vessels, under the command of a captain named Ulloa, to whom she gave a letter for her husband if he should perchance meet with him alive, in which she fervently begged of him to return to Mexico and his beautiful possessions; to think of his children, and no longer to tempt fortune, but to content himself with his former deeds of valour, which had spread

his fame throughout the whole world. In the same way the viceroy Mendoza also wrote to him, and desired him, in the most courteous and friendly terms, to return.

Ulloa had a most favorable voyage, and soon arrived in the harbour where Cortes lay at anchor. The letters of his wife, with those of his children and of the viceroy, had so much effect upon him, that he gave the command of his vessels and troops to Ulloa, embarked for Acapulco, and when he had arrived here he hastened to Quauhnahuac, where his wife resided. The joy of his family at his safe return may easily be imagined; but the viceroy, with the royal auditors, and the whole of the inhabitants of Mexico, were no less so, as they feared a general insurrection of the caziques of New Spain, who were going to take advantage of Cortes' absence.

Shortly after also, the troops arrived which had been left behind in California, but I cannot say whether they left this country of their own choice or by permission of the viceroy and royal court of audience.

Cortes had scarcely enjoyed a few months' repose when he sent out a more considerable armament, under the command of Ulloa, and this time by the express command of the royal court of audience, and according to the agreement he had made with his majesty. This armament left the harbour de la Natividad in the month of June, of one thousand five hundred and thirty, and so many years—I forgot the exact year; and Ulloa received instructions, first of all, to shape his course along the coast in search of Hurtado, of whom nothing had been heard since his departure. Ulloa sailed up and down in this manner for the space of seven months, and then returned to the harbour of Xalisco without having accomplished anything worthy of mention; but he had not been many days on shore when he was waylaid by one of his men and stabbed to death.

Thus miserably terminated the several expeditions which Cortes fitted out in the South sea, and I have frequently been assured that they cost him above 300,000 pesos. Cortes, therefore, determined to repair in person to Spain to solicit a reimbursement of this sum from his majesty, and also to bring the dispute with respect to his marquisate to some favorable issue; and lastly, to force Nuño de Guzman, who had been taken prisoner to Spain, to pay him the large amount of damages in which he had been condemned by the royal court of audience.

When we reflect that none of his undertakings were attended with success after the conquest of New Spain, we cannot at least feel surprised that people should say, he was pursued by the curses which were heaped upon him.

CHAPTER CCI.

Of the great festivities which took place in Mexico on account of the peace which was concluded between our emperor and the king of France; and of Cortes' second journey to Spain.

In the year 1538 intelligence arrived from Spain that our emperor, of glorious memory, had repaired to France, and was most splendidly received by the French monarch in the harbour of Aigues-Mortes. Here the two monarchs met, embraced each other most affectionately, and concluded a treaty of peace.[53] At this interview, which was celebrated by various festivities, there was also present queen Eleanor, the mother of the French king, and sister to our emperor.

In order to celebrate this happy event, the viceroy of New Spain, Mendoza, the marquis del Valle, the royal auditors, and several of the most distinguished Conquistadores gave splendid feasts. By this time Cortes and the viceroy had become good friends again, after having been for a length of time at variance with each other respecting the number of Indians belonging to his marquisate, and on account of the favour which the viceroy showed Nuño de Guzman. As far as I am able to judge, such splendid tournaments, sham fights, masquerades, bull fights, and public rejoicings, were never seen in Spain as took place in Mexico on this occasion. Similar festivities were celebrated as in ancient Rome, when a consul or a victorious general made a triumphal entry into the city; and all these rejoicings were superintended by a Roman cavalier, named Luis de Leon, who was said to be a descendant of some ancient patrician family of Rome.

When all these festivities were ended, Cortes ordered the necessary preparations to be made for his departure, and he invited me to accompany him, promising to obtain for me from the council of the Indies a grant of more lucrative townships than would be conferred upon me by the royal court of audience in Mexico. I accordingly embarked for Spain, and arrived there a couple of months before Cortes, who said he had been detained by a bad leg, and because he had not so soon been able to collect the quantity of gold he was desirous of taking with him on this voyage. It was in the year 1540 that Cortes thus, for the second time, arrived in Spain; and as the empress Isabella, of glorious memory, died in the month of May of the preceding year, the whole of Spain was still in deep mourning for her; and I, in my capacity of regidor of the town of Guacasualco, and as the oldest of the Conquistadores, had likewise put on deep mourning on arriving at the imperial court.

At this same time Hernando Pizarro, with his suite, consisting of above forty persons, all in deep mourning, likewise arrived in Madrid, where the court was then staying. Cortes and his suite arrived in the city almost at the same moment, was splendidly received by order of the council of the Indies, and took up his abode with the comendador Juan de Castilla. Upon the whole he was treated with the utmost respect, for whenever he went to attend the sittings of the council of the Indies, one of the auditors was sent to meet him at the door, and a seat was given him on the same bench with the president and the auditors.

Cortes never afterwards visited New Spain, for notwithstanding the admiral of Castile, the duke of Bejar, the comendador-mayor of Leon, and Doña Maria de Mendoza used all their influence with his majesty, he never could obtain leave to repair thither again. Each time these distinguished personages solicited the emperor, his majesty answered, "That all the investigations against Cortes must first be brought to an issue before he could grant him permission to return." Yet no one seemed to stir in the matter, and the council of the Indies would not say anything until his majesty should have returned from Flanders, whither he was gone to punish the town of Ghent. Neither was Nuño de Guzman allowed to return to New Spain, and though he was condemned in a heavy fine, he was allowed to retain possession of his commendaries in the province of Xalisco; and he likewise, with his suite, went about the town of Madrid clad in deep mourning. And as Cortes, Pizarro, Guzman, and several other personages of New Spain and Peru, were continually before the eyes of the public, we were derisively dubbed the mourning Indians of Peru. It was no joke, however, for Pizarro, for he was shortly after imprisoned in the Mota of Medina.

I myself returned to New Spain, and the first thing I heard on my arrival there was, that an insurrection had broken out among the mountain tribes of Cochitlan, in the province of Xalisco, to quell which the viceroy had despatched thither several officers, among whom was a certain Christobal Oñate. The Indians, however, defended themselves so courageously that the civic authorities of Mexico applied for assistance to Alvarado, who was at that time busily occupied in fitting out an extensive armament in Guatimala, destined for China; yet Alvarado readily consented to render the assistance required, and set out by forced marches for Cochitlan with a large body of troops. In this campaign he met with a fatal accident, which I will relate in a following chapter. I have now to speak of two armaments which left New Spain, one fitted out by the viceroy, the other by Alvarado.

CHAPTER CCII.

How the viceroy sends out a squadron of three vessels into the South sea to the assistance of Francisco Vasquez Coronado, in the conquest of Cibola.

I HAVE already mentioned in a former chapter that the viceroy and the royal auditors had sent out an armament for the discovery of the seven towns, which are also termed the towns of Cibola. A certain cavalier of Salamanca, called Francisco Vasquez Coronado, who was governor of the province of Xalisco, and was married to the beautiful and virtuous daughter of the treasurer Estrada, had marched out as captain-general with a strong body of horse and foot, in order further to explore the country. Having appointed a certain Oñate to govern in his absence, he took his route overland, and arrived, in the space of a few months, among the so-termed seven towns. Whether he had despatched thither the Franciscan monk, father Marcos de Nizza, in advance, or whether both arrived there at the same time, I am unable to say; however, when they came into the country of Cibola they found to their surprise the meadows abounding with cows and bulls, though different in shape to ours in Spain; the houses of the towns were several stories high, and were ascended by regular steps. The father seeing all this considered it well worth his while to return to Mexico and inform the viceroy of the country they had discovered, that he might send thither an armament of some extent. This the viceroy accordingly did, and he sent out three vessels under the chief command of Hernando Alcaron, one of the officers of his household, who was accompanied by Marcos Ruiz de Rojas, of Madrid, and a certain Maldonado, as second in command. I ought to mention that all I have related respecting the discovery of this country I have from hearsay.

CHAPTER CCIII.

Of a very extensive armament which was fitted out by Alvarado in the year 1537.

HERE I must not pass by in silence the vast armament which Alvarado fitted out in the year 1537, in the harbour of Acaxatla, lying on the coast of the South sea, in the province of Guatimala, of which he was then governor.

This expedition was fitted out according to an agreement he had entered into with the crown during his stay in Spain, by which he bound himself down to fit out a certain number of vessels at his own expense, for the express purpose of discovering some western passage to China, the Moluccas, or to other of the Spice islands. In consideration of which he was promised a certain portion of the lands he should discover, or of the annual rents that should arise from them; however, as I never saw this agreement myself, I am unable to give any further particulars about it.

Alvarado, who had always proved himself a most faithful servant to his majesty, both during the conquest of New Spain and in the campaigns of Peru, and, with his four brothers, had taken every opportunity to promote the interests of the crown, was desirous on this occasion to surpass every armament which Cortes had fitted out before him. He therefore equipped thirteen vessels of considerable burden, all well provided with ammunition, provisions, and water, and care was taken to select the best sailors and the most experienced pilots. As the harbour where he built these vessels lay above 800 miles from Vera Cruz, all the ironwork and the greater part of the building materials had to be transported thither from the latter port by land; and all this proved so expensive to him, that he might have built eighty vessels of the same size at Seville for an equal sum of money. He not only spent in fitting out this armament all the riches he had brought with him from Peru, and all the gold he could collect from his mines in Guatimala and other possessions, but he borrowed large sums of money, besides that he purchased quantities of goods on credit. To all of which was added the large sums of money he had to pay the captains of the vessels, the officers, and the troops, which amounted to 650 men; further, the purchase of horses, the best of which cost him 300 pesos a piece, and the inferior ones from 150 to 200 pesos; and lastly, the cost of a considerable store of ammunition and powder. In short, the sums of money he laid out were beyond conception. By this expedition he not only thought to render his majesty distinguished services, but he also hoped to reach China, the Moluccas, or the Spice islands, by a western passage, and either to make conquests there, or at least to open a trade between these countries and the province of which he was governor; he was therefore determined to stake both his life and the whole of his property in the enterprise.

The armament being at length fully equipped, Alvarado took the chief command himself, as captain-general, and ordered the imperial flags to be hoisted. The number of troops he had on board amounted to 650

men, including 200 horse, and after attending mass he set sail in the year 1538, but I forget in which month. He first of all shaped his course for the harbour de la Purificacion, in the province of Xalisco, where he took a further supply of water and provisions on board, besides a few additional troops.

When the viceroy received intelligence that so vast an armament had been fitted out at such a distance from Vera Cruz and Mexico, he was filled with utter astonishment. He consulted the most experienced pilots and cosmographers, and learnt from them, but particularly from his relative Villalobos, who was a very skilful geographer and navigator, that it was every way possible to reach China by sailing due west from the new world. This created a great desire in him to share the expenses of the expedition with Alvarado; for which purpose he first made the latter a proposal by letter, and then despatched to him his major-domo Agostino Guerrero and Don Luis de Castilla, to settle the terms of an agreement. In consequence of this proposal an interview took place between the viceroy and Alvarado in the township of Chiribitio, lying in the province of Mechoachan, a commendary belonging to Juan de Alvarado. Here both these distinguished personages inspected the armament, and then travelled in company to Mexico, in order to select an officer as captain-general of the whole expedition. Alvarado was desirous of appointing his relative Juan de Alvarado, of Guatimala, who, however, must not be confounded with the person of the same name just mentioned; but the viceroy's choice fell upon his relative Villalobos. Alvarado himself had been obliged to relinquish all thoughts of taking the chief command himself, as the affairs of his own province required his immediate presence there; nevertheless, he was desirous of being present at the departure of the armament, for which purpose he journeyed overland to the harbour of Natividad, where all the vessels lay in readiness, and only awaited his commands for setting sail.

Just as he was about to issue these commands, he received a letter from Christobal de Oñate, whom, as I have above stated, Vasquez Coronado, during his absence in Cibola, had appointed governor of Xalisco. In this letter Oñate stated that he was threatened on all sides by large bodies of Indians, who had, in particular, taken up a strong position on the mountains of Chochitlan, and had killed a considerable number of his troops; and that, if he did not receive immediate assistance, he must be cut off, with the whole of his men. In short, Oñate drew so dreadful a picture of the posture of affairs, that the whole of New Spain itself seemed to be threatened with destruction, if the Indians could march down victorious from their strong position on the heights.

Alvarado, on receiving this intelligence, hastened with a large body of troops to Oñate's assistance, whom he indeed found in so perilous a position, that if this timely help had not come, the Indians would very shortly have mastered his small body of troops. After Alvarado's arrival the enemy did not repeat their attacks so often, yet they fought with great courage each time the combat was renewed. It was in one of these engagements between the rocky mountains that a horse stumbled, and rolled headlong down a steep declivity. Alvarado, who happened to be ascending the same height, was unable to get out of the way of the rolling horse, which carried him down, and lay upon him, when both reached the bottom, so that his body was bruised all over, and he found himself very ill. However, the bruises he had received were not considered dangerous, and he was conveyed in a sedan to the neighbouring town de la Purificacion for medical aid, but on his way thither he had frequent swoons, and scarcely a few days elapsed before he rendered up his spirit to God, after he had partaken of the holy communion, and made his confession. Some persons even maintained that he left a will, but nothing was ever seen of it.

This excellent cavalier would, no doubt, have survived, if he had not been carried to the town in the weak state he was in, but had been promptly attended by a surgeon on the spot where the accident took place. However, it was thus ordained by the Lord, whose will be praised, and may God have mercy on his soul. Alvarado was buried with every possible splendour in the town where he breathed his last. Subsequently, I heard that Juan de Alvarado carried his earthly remains to Chiribitio, where they were again entombed with the greatest funeral pomp, many alms were distributed, and several masses were ordered for the repose of his soul.

When intelligence of Alvarado's death reached the fleet and the headquarters of Cochitlan, there being no one there to take the chief command, a number of the troops dispersed with the money they had received in advance. The consternation which this sad news created in Mexico was very great, particularly as the viceroy, after Alvarado's decease, was desired to send immediate assistance to Xalisco; but as he was unable to leave himself just then, he despatched the licentiate Maldonado thither with as large a body of men as could be assembled in the hurry of the moment; though subsequently he marched in person against the Indians, and completely subdued them, after protracted and fatiguing campaigns.

When the news of Alvarado's death reached Guatimala, the grief of his family knew no bounds; and his wife, Doña Beatrix de la Cueva,

with whom he had lived on the most affectionate terms, cried incessantly, and she and all the ladies of her household cut off their hair. His death was also a severe blow to his lovely daughter, his sons, and his son-in-law Don Francisco de la Cueva, on whom Alvarado had conferred the government of Guatimala during his absence. Every one of the Conquistadores of this province deeply lamented his death, and put on mourning for him. The bishop Don Francisco Marroquin was likewise deeply affected at the sad news, and performed a solemn mass for the dead, assisted by the whole body of the clergy, and ordered daily prayers to be offered up for the repose of his soul. Alvarado's majordomo, to show his excessive grief, had even plastered all the walls of his house with a species of black bitumen, which stuck so fast, that it could never after be taken off again.

Several cavaliers waited upon the disconsolate widow to condole with her, and begged of her to moderate her grief, and humbly to resign herself to the will of God. This, as a good Christian, she promised to do; but as women are unable to moderate their grief for the loss of those they have loved, she said she was tired of life, and longed to quit this vale of sorrows. I have merely mentioned this circumstance because Gomara, in his Chronicles, puts the following blasphemous words into her mouth: "That the Lord Jesus could not have visited her with a severer calamity;" and he maintains that it was owing to her having given utterance to this that the town of Guatimala was shortly after visited by so direful a calamity; for the volcano, which lies about two miles from the town, during a violent storm, suddenly vomited huge masses of stone and clouds of ashes, succeeded by a deluge of water, from the bursting of the crater, by which a great part of the town where the widow of Alvarado resided was totally destroyed, and she herself, with several of her ladies, drowned. However, this lady certainly gave utterance to nothing more than what I have mentioned above, and what Gomara states is an invention of his own: and if it pleased the Lord Jesus to call her away from this earth, it is not for mortal man to scrutinise the mysterious decrees of heaven.

With respect to this dreadful tempest and earthquake, I will give the particulars in another place. I cannot help mentioning with regret, that, notwithstanding the many important services which Alvarado and his five brothers, as also the other Alvarados, had rendered to the crown, the sons and daughters of the first-mentioned retained none of the townships comprehended in his commendary, and that the fact of his having subdued the whole province was never even taken into consideration, and it was no longer borne in mind that he accompanied

the expedition under Grijalva, and was present in all the campaigns of Cortes. The manner in which he himself, his wife, his children, and his brothers lost their lives, is altogether remarkable. Alvarado himself, as we have seen, met with his death in the expedition against Cochitlan; his brother Jorge, who fought in some of the campaigns of Mexico and those of Guatimala, died in Madrid in the year 1540, whither he had gone to solicit his majesty for some remuneration for the services he had rendered the crown; Gomez was killed in Peru; Gonzalo died in Guaxaca or Mexico; and Juan, who was a natural brother, ended his life at Cuba, whither he had journeyed to look over some property he possessed in this island. The eldest of Alvarado's sons, named Don Pedro, repaired, with his uncle Juan the younger, to Spain, to represent to his majesty the many valuable services his father had rendered to the crown; but neither of them were ever after heard of, and they must either have been lost at sea or taken prisoners by the Moors. His second son, Don Diego, finding that all his father's property was gone, returned to Peru, where he lost his life in battle. With respect to Alvarado's widow, I have above stated how she perished, with several of the ladies of her household, during a fearful tempest. And thus, unfortunately, did Alvarado die, at a distance from his wife and daughters, whom he loved with so much affection; and the wife without her husband, for whom she cherished the dearest remembrance! One of the sons, in his journey to Spain, was never heard of again, and the second was killed in Peru. May they become glorified with the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

A short time ago two tombs were constructed near the altar of the principal church of Guatimala, in one of which the remains of Alvarado are to be deposited, which were taken to Chiribitio; and in the other Don Francisco de la Cueva and his wife, Doña Leonor, Alvarado's daughter, have expressed a wish to be buried, when it shall please the Almighty to call them from this earthly life.

In order to return to the armament which Alvarado had fitted out, I must not omit to mention that the viceroy a year after ordered the best of the vessels to be selected, and these he sent out to sea, under the command of his relative Villalobos, with instructions to sail in a westerly direction, in search of China; but as I never heard how this expedition terminated, I will say nothing further about it; though one thing is certain, the heirs of Alvarado never derived any advantages from it, and the whole of the vast sums which Alvarado had expended in fitting out this armament were for ever lost to the family.

We must now see what Cortes is doing in Spain.

CHAPTER CCIV.

What befel the marquis del Valle on his second visit to Spain.

When the emperor, after punishing the town of Ghent, fitted out the large fleet to besiege Algiers, the marquis del Valle, with his eldest son, likewise entered the service, and he also took along with him his natural son Don Martin Cortes, whom he had by Doña Marina, besides several pages, servants, and horses, and embarked in a fine galley, with Don Enrique Enriquez. However, as the whole of this fleet, by the mysterious destiny of heaven, was cast away in a violent storm, the galley in which Cortes had embarked was also dashed to pieces, and he, with his son and most of the other cavaliers, narrowly escaped with their lives. During the universal disorder which reigned at the moment, when every one saw death before his eyes, Cortes, according to the assurances of his servants, had tied up his splendid jewels in a kerchief, and fastened them tight to his arm; for it was customary for persons of distinction to take their jewels with them; but he unfortunately lost them in the rush every one made to save his own life; which indeed must have been a loss to him of several thousands of pesos.

After this great destruction of men and vessels, the principal officers, who formed the royal council of war, advised his majesty to relinquish all idea of besieging Algiers, and to withdraw to Bugia, as it would be fruitless to make any attempts on the former place at present. When Cortes, who had been purposely excluded from the council of war, learnt this, he declared, that if his majesty would leave the matter to him, he would, with the assistance of God, and the good fortune which had ever attended his majesty's troops, very soon take the town of Algiers, even with the few remaining forces: and as one word led to another, he launched out into the praise of his officers and companions in arms, who had formed the siege of Mexico with him, and he declared that we thought nothing of hunger and hardships; that we had proved ourselves heroes on every occasion; and though we had many times been covered with wounds, and ready to sink with fatigue, yet we used to continue the conflict, and took every town and fortress that came in our way.

As many cavaliers were present when Cortes uttered this, they did not fail to acquaint his majesty with it, expressing their regret at the same time that Cortes had not sat in the council, nor did they omit to mention that the latter himself felt hurt at his having been excluded. Other cavaliers, however, openly avowed that he had been purposely

excluded, because it was well to be foreseen he would have opposed the general opinion of the council, and have given his voice for prosecuting the siege. After the destruction which had been caused by the tempest, they continued, advice was scarcely needed, for all that could be done was to save the life of his majesty, and of so many distinguished cavaliers who had accompanied him on this expedition. With the assistance of God, they concluded, the expedition against Algiers might be renewed on some future occasion: and thus it was resolved the troops should return to Spain.

After the miserable termination of this perilous expedition, Cortes grew wearied of any longer stay at court; and as old age was growing upon him, and he was beginning to feel the effects of the many hardships and fatigues he had endured through life, his greatest desire was to obtain permission from the emperor to return to New Spain. To all this may be added, the breaking off of the marriage which was to have taken place between his daughter Doña Maria and Don Alvaro Perez Osorio, heir to the marquisate of Astorga, to whom Cortes had promised, as a marriage gift, above 100,000 golden ducats, besides other valuable matters. Doña Maria had expressly arrived in Seville from Mexico, at her father's desire, that the marriage might be consummated, and he was consequently much hurt and annoyed when the match was broken off. The fault, it appears, lay with the bridegroom; and certain it is this matter caused so much annoyance to Cortes that it brought on a severe fever, accompanied by dysentery. Finding that his sickness was growing upon him, he left the town of Seville, and retired to Castilleja de la Cuesta to enjoy more repose. Here he ordered all his affairs, made his last will, and was called away from this world of troubles on the 2d of September, 1547, after receiving the holy sacrament and extreme unction. He was buried with every pomp and magnificence in the chapel containing the sepultures of the dukes of Medina Sidonia, and he was followed to the grave by a large body of the clergy and a number of cavaliers. Subsequently his remains were taken to New Spain, and interred, according to a desire expressed in his last will, either in Cojohuacan or Tezcuco,[55] I forget which.

The following is what I know respecting Cortes' age. When we first set out with him for New Spain from Cuba, in the year 1519, we often heard him say in the course of conversation, that he was thirty-four years of age, and from this day until the day of his death twenty-eight years had elapsed, which will bring his age to sixty-two.[56]

The following were the children he left behind him born in lawful wedlock: the present marquis Don Martin; Doña Maria, who was to

have been married to Don Perez Osorio, but who afterwards married the earl of Luna de Leon; Doña Juana, the wife of Don Hernando Enriquez, heir to the marquisate of Tarifa; and Doña Catalina de Arellano, who died in Seville. Besides these there was another daughter of Cortes, named Doña Leonor, who was married to a wealthy gentleman of Biscay, living in Mexico, named Juan de Toloso, who possessed lucrative silver mines. When the present marquis del Valle arrived in New Spain, he greatly disapproved of this match.

Besides these children, Cortes had two sons and three daughters born out of wedlock. One of these sons, named Don Martin, was a comendador of Santiago, whom he had by the interpretress Doña Marina. The other son, Don Luis, was also a comendador of Santiago, whom he had by a certain Hermosilla. Of these daughters one was named Pizarro, after her mother, an Indian woman of Cuba; the other was born of a Mexican woman.[57] Cortes had, during his lifetime, richly provided for these daughters, and had bestowed lucrative townships upon them; among others, that of Chinanta. There is no doubt he also remembered them in his will, for he was a man of deep penetration and had sufficient time in his latter days to order all his affairs in a proper manner, he would naturally not omit to fulfil anything that might tend to lighten his conscience. In this way, like a good Christian, he also left a fund for erecting an hospital in Mexico, and a cloister in Cojohuacan, where he desired his remains might be interred; besides this, he left large sums for other pious purposes. However, in order not to go too much into detail I will say nothing further on this head, indeed I have forgotten many circumstances relative to his bequests.

Cortes' armorial bearings and their motto bespoke his great valour, and were suitable emblems of his heroic deeds. The motto was in Latin, but as I am no Latin scholar I will not attempt to explain its meaning. His escutcheon bore the seven heads, chained, of monarchs whom he had conquered. These I believe, and have heard others say, represent the monarchs Motecusuma of Mexico, Cacamatzin of Tezcuco, Cuitlahuatzin of Iztapalapan; the kings of Tlacupa and Cojohuacan, and a powerful cazique of the province of Tulapa, near Matlatzinco, who was nephew to Motecusuma, and the nearest heir to the throne of Mexico. The last was Quauhtemoctzin, who fought the terrible battles with us during the siege of Mexico.

I must now say a few words with respect to Cortes' outward person. He was of good stature, his limbs well proportioned and strongly knit together, but his complexion was rather of an ash-coloured grey, nor was there much cheerfulness in his look; and if his countenance had been

somewhat larger it would have been more handsome. His eyes, generally speaking, had a remarkably sweet expression, but he could also look very grave. The hair of his beard, like that of his head, was black, but not very thick. His chest was well developed, his shoulders broad, his legs were rather bowed, but his ankles and feet were well proportioned. He had very little *enbonpoint,* and was rather lean. He was a capital horseman, remarkably expert in all martial exercises, both as a foot and cavalry soldier; but what was more than this he was uncommonly courageous and never shrunk back from any danger. In his younger days, while living at Hispaniola, he had frequent adventures about women, and often fought with the most expert swordsmen for the possession of some fair one, and always carried off the palm of victory. On one of these occasions he was wounded beneath the underlip, the scar of which was visible through his beard. His bearing, his gait, his conversation, his behaviour during dinner-time, and the taste he showed in his dress, all bespoke the cavalier of distinction and good breeding. He always dressed according to the fashion of the day; wore very little silk, satins, or expensive damasks; but the whole of his garments were plain and very neat. He never bedizened himself with heavy gold chains, but always had the same one, which was of exquisite workmanship, and had attached to it a kind of trinket, having on one side the image of the blessed virgin, holding her heavenly Son in her arms; on the other that of St. John the Baptist, with a Latin inscription. On one of his fingers he wore a valuable ring set with a most splendid diamond. To his velvet cap was fastened a medal, with a bust in relief and some name, but I have forgotten what it was, as latterly he used to wear nothing but cloth caps, without any medal.

The style in which he lived was that of a person of high distinction. At the head of his household stood two maestresalas and two mayordomos; he had many pages to wait upon him, and everything was served up in gold and silver. He always made a good dinner, and drank about a pint of wine diluted with water. He also took suppers; but all his dishes were plain, excepting on particular occasions, when, indeed, no expense was spared. He was always affable to us officers and his companions in arms, particularly to those who joined him in the first instance at Cuba. He was a good Latin scholar, and whenever he was in conversation with men of learning he always spoke that language; indeed, I have heard say, he was a bachelor of laws. He was also fond of poetry, and composed several pretty pieces himself, and wrote good prose. His manner of speaking was calm and his

sentences were well chosen, and his manner of arguing was remarkably convincing. When he rose in the morning he prayed from his breviary, and he attended mass every day with fervent devotion. For his tutelar saint he had chosen the blessed Virgin Mary, whom, indeed, every faithful Christian ought to look up to as his protectress and holy guardian. He also held in particular veneration St. Peter, St. Jacob, and St. John the Baptist, and was liberal in bestowing alms. His oath was, Upon my conscience! And whenever he was annoyed with any of us soldiers who were upon more intimate terms with him, he used to say, May the plague take you! When he was in a passion, a vein in his forehead and neck distended considerably; and when excessively annoyed with any one, he flung down his cloak: yet he never made use of any low or unbecoming expression to his officers or soldiers. He bore everything with great patience, and though sometimes the soldiers were very inconsiderate in their behaviour, yet Cortes never forgot himself in wrathful expressions towards them, and all he said was, Hold your tongue! or, In the name of God, be gone, and for the future be more guarded in your language, for you might have to pay dearly in repeating such conduct. If he had once made up his mind to anything, he was not to be dissuaded from it, particularly in matters relating to war; and we might argue with him as we liked on the inconsiderateness of any command he might issue, it was all to no purpose,—we were obliged to act up to it, whatever the cost might be. This was frequently the case on our expeditions to the large townships which lay on the lake of Mexico, and in our attacks upon those mountains which are now known by the name of the Marquis mountains. On the latter occasion it was in vain for us to represent to him that it would be impossible to storm the rocky heights against the huge masses of stone which were rolled down upon us; that all our courage and experience would be of no avail, and that we should all run the risk of being crushed to pieces. Our words were spoken to the wind; we were ordered to ascend and peril our lives in the attempt to scale the rugged heights. The consequence was, a complete failure; ten or twelve men were killed on the spot, and the whole of us covered with wounds. On our expedition to the Honduras, after Christobal de Oli had rebelled, I repeatedly proposed to him that we should march over the mountains; but he obstinately maintained that the route along the coast was preferable, nor would he ever believe when I told him that the country through which I proposed to march was everywhere inhabited: yet those who are at all acquainted with these parts know that there is a straight road leading from Guacasualco over Chiapa and

Guatimala to Naco, where Oli had fixed his head-quarters. But then I must also say that Cortes was always the first to put his hand to any laborious work we had to do. This he fully showed when we constructed the fortifications of Vera Cruz, for he himself was the first to take spade in hand and dig out the earth for laying the foundations. In every battle that was fought I always found him in the midst of the ranks. As early as in the battle of Tabasco, where he courageously headed the cavalry, he showed what kind of officer he was; the excellent example which he set during the construction of the fortress of Vera Cruz I have just mentioned. Then we must remember what great determination he showed when his brave officers and soldiers counselled him to run the thirteen vessels on shore; and not, as Gomara would have it, without consulting us. In the three battles which we fought with the warriors of Tlascalla he proved himself the most courageous of commanders. And then how daring it was to march into the city of Mexico with only 400 men, and to seize a monarch like Motecusuma in his own palace, surrounded by so many thousands of his warriors! It is certainly true he had good officers and soldiers to counsel him, yet it was an astonishingly bold step on his part when he ordered Motecusuma's generals, who had killed Juan de Escalante with seven of his men, to be burned at the stake in front of the monarch's own palace. And then what a remarkably bold and hazardous undertaking it was first of all to lead Narvaez and his 1300 well-armed troops by the nose with a few small presents, and afterwards, with only 266 men, merely armed with pikes and swords, to attack, completely overthrow them, and take the commander himself prisoner! He displayed wonderful feats of courage in our attack upon the great temple of Huitzilopochtli, before our disastrous flight from the city, though certainly neither his courage nor ours, as it unfortunately turned out, was of any avail. Shortly upon this, at the memorable battle of Otumpan, where the flower of the Mexican army was drawn up against us to put us all to the sword, it was Cortes who made the first run at the Mexican general-in-chief who carried the imperial standard, and threw him to the ground, and in an instant the courage of the enemy began to flag; though it must be borne in mind he was courageously assisted by his brave officers Alvarado, Sandoval, Oli, Ordaz, Dominiguez, Lares, and Tapia, besides other officers and soldiers who had no horses, but whose names I will not mention: even several of Narvaez's men fought bravely on this occasion. It was, however, Juan de Salamanca, of Ontiveros, who gave the Mexican general the finishing stroke, and tore away the splendid penache from his head, which he presented to Cortes. How dangerous

was not our position in Iztapalapan? Near Xochimilco the Mexicans had already dragged him from his horse; and had it not been for our Tlascallan auxiliaries, and the brave Christobal de Olea, of Old Castile, he would have been carried off by the enemy. In that unfortunate combat on the causeway, where sixty-two of our men were taken prisoners and sacrificed to the Mexican gods, the enemy had already laid hands on our general and wounded him in the foot; but in that perilous moment it again pleased the Almighty that Olea should come up to his rescue, assist him on horseback, and thus save him from a horrible death. But, alas! this heroic deed cost Olea his own life; and now even, while I am writing this, the figure and powerful build of Christobal de Olea comes fresh to my memory, and my heart feels sore with grief, for we were both born in the same spot, and he was a relative of my relations. I will not, however, relate the further heroic deeds of the marquis del Valle, for they are so numerous and astonishing that I should not so soon get to the end of them. I will now show a few of his peculiarities.

He was excessively fond of gambling at cards and dice, but he never lost his temper in playing, and he delighted in using those quaint expressions customary with gamblers. Nothing could exceed his vigilance during war, and in the night-time he would make the rounds himself, and visit the different outposts. He would visit the hut of every soldier, see that his weapons were ready at hand, and that he had his shoes on. Those whom he found had neglected anything in this way he severely reprimanded, and compared them to mangy sheep whose own wool is too heavy for them. During our expedition to the Honduras, he had a peculiar infirmity about him which I never observed previously, which was, that if he could not get some little nap after dinner he became so ill that he vomited up everything he had eaten. We therefore took the precaution as soon as he had dined to spread a carpet for him beneath some tree or elsewhere in the shade, on which he took a short repose; it mattered not whether it was oppressively hot, or that the rain came down in torrents, it made no difference to him. During the conquest of New Spain he was very thin, and had scarcely any *embonpoint;* but after our return from the Honduras he became excessively fat and big-bellied. When his beard was beginning to grow grey, he used to dye it black. In New Spain and on his first return to Castile he was uncommonly generous; but on his second return thither in the year 1540, he was considered very miserly, and one of his servants, named Ulloa, actually brought an action against him for non-payment of wages. If we consider his life after the conquest of

New Spain, we shall find that it was full of troubles and sorrows. The armaments which he fitted out cost him immense sums of money, from which he never derived any advantage. Both his expedition to the Honduras and to California proved very unsatisfactory. I hope, however, that he may meet with his reward in heaven, and I have every reason to think he will, because he was an honest cavalier, and a devoted reverer of the blessed Virgin, of the holy apostle St. Peter, and of other saints. May the Almighty pardon his sins, and mine also; and may he also grant me a happy death, for this is of more importance than all our conquests and victories over the Indians.

CHAPTER CCV.

Of the brave officers and soldiers who sailed from the island of Cuba with the fortunate and spirited captain Hernando Cortes, afterwards marquis del Valle.

First I have to mention the marquis Don Hernando Cortes himself, who died at Castilleja de la Cuesta, near Seville. Then come the following officers and soldiers.

Don Pedro de Alvarado, who, subsequent to the conquest of New Spain, was comendador of Santiago, chief justice and governor of Guatimala, Honduras, and of Chiapa. As we have above seen, he was accidentally killed in the province of Xalisco.

Gonzalo de Sandoval, a most distinguished officer; he was alguacil-mayor, and for a short time joint governor of New Spain with Alonso de Estrada. His majesty had been duly informed of the heroic conduct which he showed on every occasion. He died at Palos, while on his journey to court with Cortes to pay his respects to the emperor.

Christobal de Oli, a very brave officer; our quartermaster-general in the campaign of New Spain: was beheaded at Naco for having revolted with the troops which Cortes had put under his command.

When Cortes, after the conquest of New Spain, made his first appearance at court, he particularly praised these three officers, and he told his majesty that in the army with which he made the conquest of New Spain he had three officers who could be compared to the most celebrated of any age. The first he said was Pedro de Alvarado, who, besides being very courageous, was graceful in his manners, and just the man to become the father of a race of heroes. The second was Christobal de Oli, whom he called a real Hector in battle, when he

was combating man to man; but if he had known how to command, he would even have been more than a Hector. Of Gonzalo de Sandoval he said, that he united power of command, courage, and valour in such a degree as to constitute him one of the best officers that Spain ever possessed,—an officer on whom he could at all times depend, and whose words were followed up by deeds.

On this occasion Cortes likewise spoke of the other brave soldiers who fought with him in the campaigns of New Spain. It is, however, to be regretted that he omitted to mention our names with the same praise in his first despatches as he did when in his majesty's presence. In these despatches he takes all the glory and merit of our conquests to himself; and he never so much as mentions the names and heroic deeds of his officers and brave soldiers; for he only says, This I did, and thus I commanded my officers to do. For us there only remained the blank piece of paper at the end, where we had scarcely room to sign our names.

But let us continue the enumeration of our brave companions in arms.

First there was Juan Velasquez de Leon, an officer of great courage and intrepidity, who lost his life at one of the bridges on the night of sorrows.

Don Francisco de Montejo, who, subsequent to the conquest of Mexico, became chief-justice of Yucatan, and died in New Spain.

Luis Marin, a courageous and distinguished officer, died a natural death.

Pedro de Ircio, a man of middle stature; took short steps, was very passionate, and was continually talking about his heroic deeds and adventures in Spain; though among us, who never witnessed any of his valorous exploits, he was held in very little estimation. We commonly called him the second Agramant, of many words and few deeds. He was for a short time an officer in Sandoval's expedition to Tepeaquilla.

Andreas de Tapia, an officer of uncommon courage, died in Mexico.

Juan de Escalante, commandant of Vera Cruz during our first march to Mexico. He was captured by the Indians in the battle of Almeria, and died shortly after of his wounds. In this battle seven other soldiers were killed, whose names, however, I have forgotten. This was the first defeat which we sustained in New Spain.

Alonso de Avila, a courageous officer, but of a quarrelsome disposition; for which reason Cortes gave him the appointment of contador, and despatched him on business to Hispaniola, where the Hieronymite brotherhood resided, and the royal court of audience held its sittings;

and in order further to appease him, Cortes presented him with a number of gold bars and valuable trinkets.

Francisco de Lugo, a natural son of a cavalier of Medina del Campo, named Alvaro de Lugo; he was also a man of uncommon bravery, and died a natural death.

Andreas de Monjaraz was for some time captain in Mexico, but always in ill health, and suffered excessively from swellings in his groins, which rendered him unfit for a soldier. He also died in his bed.

Gregorio de Monjaraz, brother to the former, was an excellent soldier, became deaf during the siege of Mexico, and died a natural death.

Diego de Ordas was present in the first campaign of Mexico, became a comendador of the order of Santiago subsequent to the conquest of New Spain, and perished in an expedition to the river Marannon.

Respecting the four brothers of Alvarado, I have given a full account of their death in a former chapter.

Juan de Xaramillo commanded a brigantine during the siege of Mexico. He married our interpretess, Doña Marina, and was a man of distinguished parts, and also died a natural death.

Christobal de Flores, a man of great courage, was killed during the expedition of Nuño de Guzman to the province of Xalisco.

Christobal de Gamboa was Cortes' equerry, and died a natural death.

Calcedo was a man of great wealth, and likewise died in his bed.

Francisco de Saucedo, of Medina de Rioseco, a man always very neatly dressed, and whom we termed the gallant. He had formerly been maestresala to the admiral of Castile, and perished on the night of sorrows.

Gonzalo Dominiguez, a man of great courage, and an excellent cavalry soldier, was taken prisoner by the Indians, and died in captivity.

Francisco de Morla, of Xerez, likewise a brave and distinguished cavalry soldier, lost his life in the night of sorrows.

There was also another Morla, of Ciudad Rodrigo, killed in an expedition to the mountains of Guatimala.

Francisco de Bonal, of Salamanca, also a man of great courage, died a natural death.

There were two brave men of the name of Lares, one a cavalry soldier, the other a crossbow-man, and both perished at the bridges on the night of sorrows.

Simon de Cuenca, Cortes' major-domo, was killed, with seven other Spaniards, by the Indians of Xicalango.

The same misfortune befel Francisco de Medina, who commanded as captain in one of our expeditions. With him fifteen other soldiers were killed, but I forget their names.

Maldonado, of Salamanca, whom we commonly called the broad; an officer who greatly distinguished himself. He died a natural death.

The two brothers Francisco and Juan Chico, of Fregenal. The first was a merchant, and died of a severe illness at St. Domingo; the second died in Indian captivity.

Francisco de Terrazas, major-domo of Cortes, greatly distinguished himself as a soldier, and died a natural death.

Christobal del Corral, our first standard-bearer in Mexico, and a man of uncommon bravery. He returned to Spain, where he died.

Antonio de Villareal, who married Isabella de Ojeda. He afterwards changed his name to Antonio Serrano de Cardona. He died a natural death.

Francisco Rodrigues Magarino, a man who greatly distinguished himself, and also died in his bed.

In the same way Francisco Flores, who was of a noble family, and lived in Guaxaca.

Alonso de Grado, a better man of business than a soldier, would not desist from importuning Cortes until he had given him Doña Isabella, Motecusuma's daughter, in marriage. He also died in his bed.

There were four soldiers of the name of Solis. One was far advanced in years, and perished on the night of sorrows. The second was a very odd kind of fellow, we called the helmet, and he ended his days in Guatimala. The third was Pedro, to whom we gave the name of Tras la Puerta, because he was always looking out behind his door to see who was passing by, without, however, any one being able to see him. The fourth de Solis was called the warrior, but sometimes we also jokingly called him the silk coat; for he said his health was always good when he wore silk. These brothers all died a natural death.

The brave soldiers Berritez and Juan Ruano both perished on the night of sorrows.

Bernardino Vasquez de Tapia, an officer of great distinction, died a natural death, leaving great wealth behind him.

Christobal de Olea, of Medina del Campo, a soldier of astonishing courage, and of whom it may be well said, that, next to God, he twice saved the life of Cortes, as has been related in former chapters.

There was also another courageous soldier among us, who had only one hand; the other had been cut off in Spain, according to a sentence which had been passed upon him. This man died in Indian captivity.

Another soldier, named Tuvilla, likewise lost his life in this way. He limped with one foot, and said he had fought at the battle of Garigliano, under the great captain.[58]

Of the two brothers Gonsalo and Juan Ximena, the first died in Indian captivity, and the latter as alcalde-mayor of Vera Cruz.

Juan Cuellar, an excellent cavalry soldier, married the beautiful Doña Anna, daughter of the king of Tezcuco, and died in his bed; so also the other Cuellar, a relative of Francisco Verdugo.

Santos Hernandez, of Soria, was rather advanced in years, and we generally called him the good old scout. He also died as the two former.

Pedro Moreno Medrano lived for a length of time in Vera Cruz, and was often one of the ordinary alcaldes. He was a man who loved strict justice, afterwards lived at Puebla, and was a brave soldier, and devotedly attached to his monarch. He also died in his bed.

Juan Limpias de Carvajal, a brave soldier, commanded one of the brigantines, and became deaf in battle. He died like the former. So also Melchior de Galvez, who settled in Guaxaca.

Roman Lopez, a man of great courage, lost an eye during the siege of Mexico, and afterwards died in Guaxaca.

Villandromo, a relative of the earl of Ribadeo, was also an excellent soldier, and died in his bed. So also Osorio, of Old Castile, a soldier of uncommon bravery, and of great weight in Vera Cruz.

The excellent soldier Rodrigo Castanneda died in Spain.

Pilar, who rendered great services, as an interpreter, died in the expedition of Nuño de Guzman against Cojohuacan.

A soldier of the name of Granado is still living in Mexico.

The excellent soldier Martin Lopez rendered the most efficient services in building the thirteen brigantines, without which we should scarcely have been able to subdue the city of Mexico. He is still living, and resides in this town.

The crossbow-men Juan de Naxara and Ojeda were both excellent soldiers, the latter of whom lost an eye in the siege of Mexico, and has settled in the country of the Zapotecs.

La Serna possessed some silver mines, but I do not know what has become of him.

Alonso Hernandez Puerto Carrero, a cavalier of most distinguished parts, was thrown into prison, as we have seen, by the bishop of Burgos, where he ended his days shortly after. He was one of the chief officers who first sailed with us from Cuba, and I should have mentioned his name long before this, if he had come sooner to my memory.

Alonso or Juan Luis was remarkably tall, and we used jokingly to call him the little child. He died in Indian captivity. So also Alonso Monroy, who was believed to be the son of a comendador of the order of Santiago.

Hernando Burguenno died a natural death, and was also an excellent soldier.

Villalobos and Juan del Rio both returned as wealthy men to Spain.

Both Tirado, of Puebla, who was a merchant, and a certain Navarette died in their beds.

Juan Rico de Alanis died in Indian captivity. Another excellent soldier was Gonsalo Hernandez de Alanis.

Francisco Martin de Vendabel and his comrade Pedro de Gallego were taken prisoners, and sacrificed to the Mexican idols. The capture of these men was entirely owing to Cortes, who, thinking to lay an ambush for the enemy, was caught in one himself.

There were three soldiers of the name of Truxillos, all men of uncommon courage, but who died in Indian captivity.

Juan Flamenco, Francisco de Barco, who commanded in Cholulla, and Juan Perez, who murdered his own wife, all three died a natural death.

Najera, the hunchback, was a remarkably droll fellow; and another hunchback, named Madrid, were courageous soldiers, and were either killed in Zacatula or Colima.

Juan de Inhiesta and Alamilla, capital crossbow-men, with Moron, an excellent musician, and the brave soldier Valera, all four died a natural death. So also the courageous Villafuerte, who married a relative of Cortes' first wife; and a certain Gutierres. Valladolid, the stout, an excellent soldier, died in Indian captivity.

Pacheco greatly distinguished himself, with Hernando de Lerma or Lerna, who was a captain. Both died peaceably in Mexico.

Suarez the elder, who killed his wife with a stone mortar, also died a natural death.

Angula, Francisco Gutierrez, and Santa Clara, all three born at the Havannah, died in Indian captivity.

Garci Caro, and Larios the younger, both died a natural death, and had settled in Mexico.

Juan Gorrez lived for some time in Guatimala, and returned to Spain a wealthy man.

Of the two brothers Ximenes, of Linguijuela in Estremadura, one died in his bed, and the other in Indian captivity. The two brothers Florin likewise ended their lives in the same manner.

Gonzalez de Najara, and his two nephews Ramirez. The first was killed among the mountains of Guatimala, and the two latter perished on the night of sorrows.

The brave soldier Amaya, and the two brothers Carmonas, of Xerez,

died a natural death. So also one of the two Vargas', of Seville; the other died in Indian captivity.

The courageous soldier Polanco, of Avila settled in Guatimala, and died a natural death.

Hernan Lopez de Avila managed the properties of deceased parties, and accumulated great wealth, with which he returned to Spain.

Bernardino de Corio, Juan de Aragon, and a certain Santisteban died natural deaths.

Bartolomé Pardo and a certain Cieza died in Indian captivity.

Pedro Escudero, Juan Cermenno, and his brother, were excellent soldiers. The first two, it will be remembered, were hung by Cortes, for attempting to desert with one of the vessels to Cuba.

The pilot Gonzalo de Umbria was also an excellent soldier, who, by command of Cortes, had his feet cut off. His majesty subsequently bestowed on him an annuity of 2000 pesos or some Indian commendaries; but, for fear of Cortes, he durst not return to Spain.

Rodrigo Rangel was a very talented man, but he never distinguished himself as a soldier, and he died of severe swellings in his groins.

Francisco de Orozco suffered likewise from this disease. He had served in the Italian campaigns; he was sent in command of a small detachment to Tepeaca, while we were quartered in Mexico. I do not however know what became of him.

Mesa, who had previously served as an artilleryman in Italy, was drowned in a river subsequent to the conquest of Mexico.

Alobancho, of Old Castile, a man of great courage, died in Indian captivity.

Luis Velasquez, of Arevalo, perished in the expedition to the Honduras.

Alonso de Barrientos escaped to the Indians of Chinanta, when the Mexicans put twenty-six men and five Spanish ladies to death at Tustepec.

Almodovar, with his son and two nephews. One of the latter died in Indian captivity, the others a natural death.

The two brothers Martinez, of Fregenal, both brave soldiers, and a certain Logos, who distinguished himself, all three died in Indian captivity.

Juan del Puerto, also an excellent soldier, fell a victim to a disease of the groins.

Father Olmedo, a great theologian, a capital singer, and a man possessed of singular virtues, died a natural death.

Sancho de Avila, of Garrobillas, died in Indian captivity. He was said to have been worth 6000 pesos before he left St. Domingo, with which, however, he returned to Spain, and lost all in gambling.

Alonso Hernandez de Palo, a man advanced in years, had two of his nephews with him, one of whom was a capital crossbow-man. The two latter died a natural death, but the uncle in Indian captivity. So also Alonso de la Mesa, and Rabanal Montannes, who were both excellent soldiers.

Pedro de Guzman married Doña Francisca de Valtierra, of Valencia, with whom he went to Peru; both of whom, it was said, with their horses, a negro, and several other persons, were frozen to death.

Christobal Diaz, an excellent crossbow-man, of Colmenar de Arenas, died peaceably in his bed.

The soldier Ratamales was killed by the Indians of Tabasco. The brave soldiers Gines Nortes, Luis Alonso, and Alonso Catalan were killed in Yucatan.

Juan Siciliano settled in Mexico, where he died a natural death.

Camillas served as a drummer both in Italy and New Spain, and fell into the hands of the Indians. The same misfortune befel Hernandez, Cortes' private secretary; and Juan Diaz, who had a gutta serena on one of his eyes, and was an officer of Cortes' household.

Diego de Coria died a natural death in Mexico.

Juan Nuñez Mercado came as a very young man to New Spain, is now living at Puebla, but is blind of both eyes.

An excellent soldier was also Juan Sedenno, and he was considered the wealthiest man of our troops. This man had great weight in New Spain, and died a peaceable death.

Balnor, of Trinidad, died in Indian captivity.

Saragoza was advanced in years when he joined our ranks, and died a natural death.

Diego Martin de Ayamente had the same good fortune, and was also an excellent soldier.

Cardenas, who was a nephew of the comendador-mayor Cardenas, died in Indian captivity. The other Cardenas was a sailor, of Triana, the same who brought accusations against Cortes, and received from his majesty an annuity of 1000 pesos. He died a natural death in Mexico.

Arguello, of Leon, an excellent soldier; Vazquez, a man of uncommon strength and courage; and Arroyuelo de Olmedo, all three died in Indian captivity.

Diego Herandez assisted in the building of the brigantines, became blind, and died a natural death.

Pizarro had a command as captain, was a relation of Cortes, and died in Indian captivity.

Alvaro Lopez, who had settled at Puebla, died in his bed. So also the

soldier Yannez, of Cordoba, who accompanied us on the expedition to the Honduras. When he returned he found his wife married to another, but he never took her back.

The excellent soldier Magallanes, a Portuguese, was a nimble pedestrian, who, with his countryman Platero, died in Indian captivity.

The four other Portuguese soldiers named Martin de Alpedrino, Juan Alvarez Rabaso, and Gonzalo Sanchez, a man of great bodily strength, and Gonzalo Rodriguez, who was the most distinguished of the four, all died a natural death.

Of two other Portuguese, named Villanuevas, both very tall men, I know nothing more than that they settled in la Puebla.

Of the three Avilas, Gaspar died a natural death; the other, who was always about the person of Andreas de Tapia, in Indian captivity; and the third settled somewhere in New Spain.

Two soldiers of the name of Vandadas, both far advanced in years, and three others of the name of Espinosa, all died in Indan captivity. One of the Espinosas we used to call, "God bless you," because he was constantly saying this; which, indeed, is an excellent sentence: he died in peace. So also the courageous soldier Pedro Poron, of Toledo. Another excellent soldier, named Villasinda, of Portillo, entered a Franciscan monastery.

Of the two brave San Juans, of whom one was called the "high-minded;" the first died in Indian captivity, and the second peaceably in his bed. So also the courageous soldier Izguierdo, of Castro Mocho. An intrepid soldier was also Caceres, of Truxillo, who was captured by the Indians. Alonso de Herrera was also a courageous warrior, who for some time commanded in the country of the Zapotecs. The same who fought the duel with Figuero during the administration of Estrada. He died among the Indians of the Marannon. Figuero was drowned on his return to Spain.

There was also a young man named Maldonado, of Medellin, who always suffered from disease of the groins; but I forget what afterwards became of him. He must not be confounded with a soldier of the same name, who married Doña Maria de Rincon. The soldier, Morales, was advanced in years, and limped with one foot, he was one of the ordinary alcaldes of Vera Cruz, where he kept good order and was considered an honest man.

Escalona, the younger, died in Indian captivity. The three soldiers Arevalo, Juan Leon, and Madrigal, who settled in Vera Cruz, never fought in any of our battles, and all three died a natural death.

Lencero, to whom the Venta belonged, known as the Venta[59] de

Lencero, between Vera Cruz and la Puebla, was an excellent soldier, and entered the order of the brothers of charity. His example was followed by Alonso Duran, who was near-sighted, and generally performed the office of sacristan.

Navarro, who generally kept company with Sandoval's servants, died a natural death at Vera Cruz.

Another courageous soldier, Alonso Talavera, died in Indian captivity.

Of the two Indians whom we took with us from Cuba, one died in Indian captivity, the other in his bed.

The drummer Benito Bejel, who had served in the Italian campaigns, and Alonso Romero, who settled down a rich man in Vera Cruz, both died a natural death.

Sindos de Portillo received a very lucrative commendary, which produced him considerable riches. But he relinquished all his worldly goods, sold them by public auction, distributed the money among the poor, and entered the order of the brothers of charity.

The courageous soldier Quintero likewise entered this order, possessed considerable property, and gave it all to the church.

Alonso de Aguilar was also a man of wealth, and he sold all he possessed and entered the order of the Dominicans.

Another rich soldier, named Varguillas, entered the order of the Franciscans, but subsequently left the cloister again.

Another excellent soldier, named Escalante, who was very neat in his person and an excellent cavalry soldier, also entered the Franciscan order.

Gaspar Diaz, of Old Castile, was a man of considerable wealth; but he relinquished all his property and lived a hermit in the most deserted spot among the mountains of Huexotzinco. He slept on straw, and lived so severe a life of penance that he became quite enfeebled. When the bishop Don Juan de Zumarroga learnt this, he admonished him not to lead such a life of severity. However, he became so celebrated for piety that several others joined him, and he died in the space of four years, and entered into eternal glory.

Ribadeo, of Galicia, whom we termed the "winebibber," because he was given to drink, was killed in the battle of Almeria. A similar fate befel another soldier, whom, on account of his shortness, we called the little Galician.

Lerma, who once saved Cortes' life, was a courageous soldier; but on account of some misdemeanour or other he fled to the Indians, and we never after heard of him.

Pinedo was also an excellent soldier, and had formerly served under

the governor of Cuba. He was sent by Narvaez to Mexico, but was killed by the Indians on his road thither.

The excellent crossbow-man Pedro Lopez, died peaceably in his bed. Another soldier, of the same name, accompanied Alonso de Avila to Hispaniola where he died.

One of our three smiths fell into the hands of the Indians, the two others died a natural death. One was named Juan Garcia, the second Hernan Martin, the name of the third I have forgotten.

Alvaro of Galicia likewise died a natural death in Mexico. Paredes, who was an old man and has still a son living in Yucatan, died among the Indians. The same misfortune befel Gonzalo Meia Rapapelo, who said he was a nephew of that Meia, who, with a certain Canteno, committed so many robberies during the reign of king John.

Pedro de Tapia died of the gout sometime after the conquest of Mexico.

Of all our pilots, Anton de Alaminos, his son of the same name, Camacho, Manquillo, Sopuerta, Cardenas, and Gonzalo Umbria, Sopuerta alone settled in New Spain, the others, fearing the resentment of Cortes, because they had given Garay some information respecting the country, of which he obtained the appointment of governor, durst not return to this country.

Another pilot, named Lucas de Genna, died in Indian captivity. His countryman Lorenzo settled in Guaxaca, where he died, after marrying an old Portuguese woman. Enrique de Palencia was drowned in fording a river, from the weight of his arms. The carpenter Christobal de Jaen died in Indian captivity.

Ochoa, of Biscay, a man of wealth and distinction, died a natural death in Guaxaca. The brave Zamisdio was obliged to flee from Mexico because he had killed several persons there. He returned to Spain, became an officer, and was killed with several other cavaliers near Locastil.

The low jester Cervantes died among the Indians. The same fate befel Plazuela and Alonso Perez Maite, who married a beautiful Indian female of Bayamo.

Martin Vasquez, of Olmedo, died rich and respected in Mexico. So also Sebastian Rodriguez, a capital crossbow-man, and his comrade Pennalosa.

The sailor Alvaro, was killed by the Indians, during our expedition to the Honduras. He was said to be the father of thirty children, by Indian women.

Both Pedro Sabrite, and Juan Perez Malinche, whose real name was Artiaga, died a natural death.

Geronimo de Aguilar was an excellent soldier. He had been for several years in the power of the Indians; he died of a disease of the groins.

Pedro Valenciano, who lived in Mexico, and two of the three soldiers named Tarifas, died a natural death. One of these settled in Guaxaca, and married Catalina Muñoz: the second, whom we called "Tarifa of Services," because he was always boasting of the many services he rendered his majesty gratis: the third we called "Tarifa with the white hands," because he was neither fit for service nor anything else, but was always telling us old stories about Seville; he was drowned with his horse in a river of the Golfo Dulce during our expedition to the Honduras.

Pedro Sanchez Farsan, who commanded in Tezcuco during the siege of Mexico, died a natural death.

Alonso de Escobar, who prided himself on having been page to the governor of Cuba, was killed by the Indians. Another Escobar, whom we called the bachelor, was an apothecary, and dressed our wounds. He died raving mad. A third soldier of this name had a more unfortunate end. He was a remarkably courageous soldier, but was hung for having ill-used a married woman.

A soldier named Santiago, a native of Huelva, returned to Spain a wealthy man. His comrade Ponce died in Indian captivity. A soldier of the name of Mendes shared a similar fate; he was far advanced in years when he first joined our ranks.

Three of our men were killed in the battles of Tabasco; but Saldaña is the only one I remember by name.

Orteguilla the elder, and his son of the same name, who was some time page to Motecusuma, were killed by the Indians. Gaona, the brave Luis Farsan, and Morillas shared a similar fate.

Juan de Caceres died a rich man in Mexico.

Gonzalo Hurones and Ramirez the elder both died a natural death.

Rojas went to Peru.

Astorgos was an old man when he came to New Spain, and he died peaceably at Guaxaca.

The courageous soldier Valdovinos and Tostado both died among the Indians; a brother of the latter died more fortunately.

Guillen de la Loa, Andreas Nuñez, and the harper Pedro, with three other soldiers who came to us from one of Garay's vessels, are also deserving of notice. The first was killed by a cannon ball, one died a natural death, and the other in Indian captivity. The same misfortune befel Porras the red head, who was a beautiful singer.

Ortiz performed charmingly on the guitar, and gave lessons in dancing. He had been a miner at Cuba, and joined us with his friend Bartolomé Garcia, who possessed the finest horse of our whole troop. Both died in Indian captivity. The brave and excellent crossbow-man Serrano shared a similar fate.

Pedro Valencia, of Placencia, died a natural death.

Quintero the navigator, and Alonso Rodriguez, who possessed lucrative gold mines in Cuba, were both killed by the Indians. Gaspar Sanchez, who pretended to be a nephew of the treasurer of Cuba, and six other soldiers of Narvaez's corps were killed in storming the Marquis mountain.

Pedro Palma, the first husband of Elvira Lopez the tall, with the priest Misa and the soldier Trebejo were hung, either by Francisco de las Casas or by Gil Gonsalez de Avila, for having attempted to raise an insurrection among the troops on their return from Naco. When we returned from the Honduras with Luis Marin we saw the large tree on which they were all three hung.

Father Juan de las Varillas was an excellent theologian and a man of great piety; he died a natural death.

Andreas de Mola and the brave soldier Alberza died in Indian captivity.

Besides these were a number of sailors who proved themselves excellent soldiers. Even the boys, who served on board the vessels we ran on shore, fought with wonderful courage. Of all these I only remember the names of Pennates and Pinzones. Some died among the Indians, some returned to Spain to bring accusations against Cortes.

Lastly, I mention myself; for I made the two voyages of discovery to New Spain previous to going out with Cortes, as has been seen in the proper place. I cannot sufficiently thank and praise God and the blessed Virgin for having shielded me in all the battles, and saved me from falling into the hands of the Indians, who at that time sacrificed all prisoners to their abominable idols. To heaven I must also offer up my thanks for giving me power to describe our heroic deeds, and to publish to the world the names of all the brave officers and soldiers who conquered New Spain; and not that all the honour, glory, and our merit in the conquest might be given to one officer alone.

CHAPTER CCVI.

Of the stature and outward person of several brave officers and soldiers, and of their age when they first joined Cortes.

Of the marquis Don Hernando Cortes and of Christobal de Oli, I have spoken in former chapters. I will therefore now commence with Don Pedro de Alvarado.

This officer was comendador of the order of Santiago, chief-justice and governor of Guatimala, the coast of the Honduras, and of Chiapa. He may have been about thirty-four years of age when he came with us to New Spain. His build was both beautiful and strong; his countenance was all cheerfulness, and his eye had a remarkably sweet expression. It was on account of his pleasant looks that the Mexicans called him Tonatio, or the sun. He was of a slender figure, a splendid horseman, open and agreeable in conversation, and remarkably neat in his dress, which was always of the richest stuffs. He usually wore a small gold chain about his neck, to which was suspended a fine jewel, and on one of his fingers a diamond ring.

The chief justice and governor of Yucatan, Montejo, was of middling stature, had a pleasant-looking countenance, was a good horseman, and much addicted to all kinds of pleasures. He was about thirty-five years of age when he came to New Spain, but was rather a man of business than a soldier. He was generous of disposition, but lived beyond his income.

Gonzalo de Sandoval was a man of extraordinary courage and of heroic valour. He was twenty-two years of age when he joined us, soon became alguacil-mayor of New Spain, and was, for the space of eleven months, joint governor with Alonso de Estrada. The frame of his body was of the most beautiful proportions, and gave to the beholder the full expression of muscular power; his chest was finely developed, his shoulders broad, and his legs rather bowed. He had a large face, his hair and beard were of an auburn colour, and curled as it was then the fashion. His voice was rough and unpleasant, and he had a slight lisp. He knew no more of the arts and sciences than he required, was not in the least avaricious, and never took more than his rightful share. He was fond of seeing soldiers act strictly up to their commands, but favoured and assisted them in every possible manner. He was not a man who put on rich garments, but dressed simply like a good soldier. His was the finest and best rode horse of the whole troop; and a more splendid animal, according to general opinion, was even not to be found

in Spain. It was of a chesnut colour, had a white star on the forehead, and one of the left legs was white. This horse was called Motilla, and its excellence has become a proverb; for when any one wants to praise a horse, he says, It is as good as the Motilla. It was of this officer that Cortes said to the emperor, that there was a captain among his troops who was never surpassed in courage and determination, and who was fit to command the largest armies. He was a native of Medellin, a hidalgo, and his father had been alcalde of a fortress.

Juan Velasquez de Leon, of Old Castile, may have been about twenty-six years of age when he joined our ranks. His limbs were straight and beautifully formed; his chest and shoulders were broad, and he was altogether a powerful man. His face was full, and he used to dye his curly beard. His voice was harsh and unpleasant, and he stuttered a little. He was uncommonly courageous, agreeable in conversation, and shared his last farthing with his comrades. It was said of him that he had killed a wealthy and distinguished cavalier at Hispaniola named Basaltas, for which he was obliged to flee: the royal court of audience indeed despatched alguacils to apprehend him, but he defended himself so bravely against them that he escaped to Cuba and thence to New Spain. He was a splendid horseman, but fought equally well on foot as on horseback.

Diego de Ordas, a native of Campas, was forty years of age when he came to New Spain. He was a capital officer with the sword and buckler, but did not excel as a cavalry soldier. He was equal to any one in foresight and courage. He was rather tall and strong of limb; his face carried with it the very expression of muscular power; his beard was thin and black. He stuttered a little, and many words he could not pronounce plainly; but he was open and agreeable in conversation.

The captain Luis Marin was a well-built, powerful, and courageous man. His legs were rather bowed; his beard of a ruddy hue; his face broad, rather pitted with the smallpox, but cheerful. He was thirty years of age when he came to New Spain, was a native of San Lucar, and he lisped a little like the inhabitants of Seville. He was an excellent horseman and an agreeable companion.

The captain Pedro de Ircio was of middling stature, had short legs, but a pleasant-looking countenance. His tongue was never silent, and he was always relating his stories of Don Pedro Giron and of the earl of Ureña. He was more bold in word than in deed; we therefore called him the Agramant of many words and few works.

Alonso de Avila was thirty-three years of age when we arrived in

New Spain. He was of good stature, had a cheerful countenance, was remarkably courageous, and eloquent and persuasive in argument. He was very open-hearted towards his comrades, but rather imperious, jealous, and turbulent, for which reason Cortes despatched him with Quiñones to Spain to present part of the treasure of Motecusuma and Quauhtemoctzin to his majesty, but he was captured by a French corsair, and imprisoned in France. Several years after he again returned to New Spain. He was uncle to the two sons of Gil Gonzalez de Benavides, who were decapitated in Mexico.

Andres de Monjaraz, who had a command during the siege of Mexico, was a man of good stature; he had a cheerful countenance, black beard, and was an agreeable companion. He was always suffering with painful swellings in his groins, which was the reason he never accomplished anything worthy of mention, and I have merely noticed him here because he was once put in command. He was about thirty years of age when he came to New Spain.

Here I must not forget to mention the very brave soldier Christobal de Olea, a native of Medina del Campo. He was twenty-six years of age when he joined our ranks. He was of middling stature; his limbs were strong and beautifully proportioned; his chest and shoulders broad; his face was full and cheerful; his hair and beard curly, his voice strong and clear.

Neither must I forget to mention Gonzalo Dominiguez and Larez, who were considered equal in courage to Olea. Both were strong of limb, well proportioned, had agreeable countenances, and were men of excellent dispositions; in short, they may be considered among the bravest soldiers Spain ever possessed.

Andreas de Tapia was also a courageous officer, and was about twenty-four years of age when he joined us. He had rather an unpleasant expression of countenance, which was of a leaden colour; his beard was thin, but his figure was stately. He was both a capital horse and foot soldier.

I should be going too much into detail if I were to describe the countenances and figures of all the officers and soldiers who fought with Cortes. We were all men of courage and distinction, and we have deserved that our names should be written in letters of gold. I must also pass by in silence many brave officers of Narvaez's *corps*; for I intended from the beginning to confine myself to the heroic deeds of the small army which first set out for New Spain with Cortes. I must, however, make an exception in the person of Pamfilo Narvaez.

This officer may have been about forty-two years of age when he arrived in New Spain with an army of 1300 men, which was totally defeated by our small body of 266 men. He was tall of stature, strong of limb; his beard was red; his face large but cheerful. His voice was amazingly powerful, and sounded as if it proceeded from a vault. He was a capital horseman, and was said to be an officer of great courage. He was a native of Tudela or Valladolid, on the Duero, and was married to a lady of rank named Maria de Valenzuela. He had settled in Cuba; was considered very rich, but miserly. He was an excellent spokesman, and obtained for himself the government of Florida, where, however, he lost both his life and his property.

Several curious cavaliers who had read the minute description I have here given respecting the persons and the characters of the officers and soldiers of the courageous and fortunate Don Hernando Cortes, marquis del Valle Oaxaca, inquired of me in astonishment how I could remember all these little particulars after so many years had rolled by. I told them it was no great wonder at all when they reflected that we were only 550 men altogether, who daily came in contact with each other in the numerous campaigns, battles, skirmishes, and at the outposts. We were constantly in conversation with each other, and in this way it soon became known what happened to every individual, in what battles he fell, or whether he was captured by the Indians and sacrificed to their idols: besides which, a list of the killed was taken after every engagement. Nor can I see anything so very wonderful in all this; for we read in ancient times of generals who knew every soldier personally, his name and birthplace, though these armies were generally composed of 30,000 men. Historians have mentioned as instances of this, Mithridates, king of Pontus, of one of the kings of Epirus, and of Alexander of Macedonia. The renowned Carthaginian general Hannibal is also said to have known every one of his soldiers personally. In our times we know this of Gonzalo Hernandez de Cordoba, called the "great captain." Besides these there are many other generals who possessed the same powerful memory. But I go further than this, for I perfectly retain in my memory the outward person and peculiar habits of every one of my companions in arms, so that I should be able to sculpture or draw the very form of their bodies, their manner of holding themselves, and the exact expression of their countenances, as well as is mentioned of Apelles, the celebrated painter of old, or in later times of Berruguete, Michael Angelo, or the far-famed Burgales, who is termed the second Apelles. Indeed I should very much like to paint each of them according to life, with the full expres-

sion of courage which sat on their countenances the moment they rushed into battle!

Thanks be to God and the blessed Virgin who saved me from being sacrificed to the idols, and from so many perils, and thereby rendered it possible for me to write this history!

CHAPTER CCVII.

Of the great merit which is due to us, the true Conquistadores.

I HAVE now said sufficient of every individual soldier who accompanied Cortes, and how each one ended his life. If any one wishes to know anything further about us, I can tell him that most of us were men of good families; and if the lineage of some was not quite so distinguished, we must remember that all are not born equal in this world, neither in respect to rank nor virtues. However, by the valour of our arms and our heroic deeds, we conquered New Spain, with the great city of Mexico, and many other provinces, thereby rendering the most important services to the emperor our master, though at so vast a distance from Castile; nor had we any assistance in the terrible battles we fought night and day, saving that of our Lord Jesus Christ, who indeed is our true strength. What we have done is sufficient to spread our fame throughout the world!

If we read the ancient histories, at least if they speak truth, we find that all those men who gained honorable titles to themselves, as well in Spain as in other countries, gained them solely by the valour of their arms, or by other important services they rendered to their monarchs. I have even observed that several of those celebrated cavaliers, who obtained titles and extensive grants of land, had merely entered the army for the pay they received, and yet gained for themselves and descendants, in perpetuity, towns, castles, lands, besides various privileges and immunities. When the king of Aragon, Don Jayme, reconquered a large part of his kingdom from the Moors, he divided it among the cavaliers and soldiers who had fought with him, and from that time are dated the several escutcheons which their descendants possess. The same thing was done after the conquest of Granada and Naples by the great captain. The noble house of Orange originated in a similar manner.

But we added the immense territory of New Spain to the Spanish crown, without his majesty knowing anything about it: and it is for

this reason I have written these memoirs, that the great, important, and excellent services which we have rendered to God, our emperor, and to the whole of Christendom, may become known; and I think, when everything is put into the same scale, and weighed according to its quantity, we shall be found equally deserving of remuneration as those cavaliers of previous times.

Though the number of courageous soldiers enumerated in a former chapter may have been considerable, yet I myself was not one of the least among them, and I had always the reputation of being a good soldier. If the curious reader has perused this history with attention, he will have seen in how many severe battles I fought, both during the two first voyages of discovery, and in the campaigns under Cortes, in New Spain; how nearly I was killed on two different occasions, and only escaped by the utmost exertion of my strength from being sacrificed to the abominable idols; not to mention the dreadful hardships I suffered from hunger, thirst, and cold, and the many perils to which those who go out for the discovery of new countries are inevitably exposed.

I will now relate the great advantages which Spain has derived from our illustrious conquests.

CHAPTER CCVIII.

Of the human sacrifices and abominations practised by the inhabitants of New Spain; how we abolished these, and introduced the holy Christian faith into the country.

After thus describing our glorious deeds of arms, I will show how advantageous they proved in the service of God and of our emperor. These advantages were purchased with the lives of most of my companions in arms, for very few had the good fortune to escape being captured and sacrificed by the Indians.

I will commence with the human sacrifices and the other abominations which were practised throughout the whole of the provinces we subdued. According to the computations of the Franciscan monks, who arrived in New Spain subsequent to father Olmedo, above 2500 persons were annually sacrificed to the idols in Mexico, and some of the towns lying on the lake.[60] As this barbarous custom was also prevalent in all the other provinces, the number, of course, is much greater. But these human sacrifices were not the only abominations that were

practised by the inhabitants; I should, however, scarcely know where to end, if I were to enumerate them all. I will, therefore, only relate what I witnessed with my own eyes, and heard with my own ears. Of the victims that were sacrificed, the faces, ears, tongues, lips, the breast, the arms and legs, were brought as a burnt-offering to the idols.

In some provinces circumcision took place, which was effected by means of sharp knives made of flint. The cursed idol temples were called cues, and were as numerous as the churches, chapels, and monasteries in Spain. Every township had its own temples, and these infernal buildings were filled with demons and diabolical-looking figures. Besides these, every Indian man and woman had two altars, one near to where they slept, and the other near the door of the house. In these were placed several wooden boxes, which they termed petacas, full of small and large idols, flint knives used in the sacrifices, and books made of the bark of trees, which they call amatl, containing their signs to denote the seasons, and things that have happened. Most of the Indians, particularly those living on the coasts and in the hotter climates, were given to unnatural lusts. To such a dreadful degree was this practised, that men even went about in female garments, and made a livelihood by their diabolical and cursed lewdness.

The Indians ate human flesh in the same way we do that of oxen, and there were large wooden cages in every township, in which men, women, and children were fattened for their sacrifices and feasts. In the same way they butchered and devoured all the prisoners they took during war time. Sons committed incest with their mothers, fathers with their daughters, brothers with their sisters, and uncles with their nieces. They were addicted to the vice of drunkenness to a most terrible degree, and the inhabitants of Panuco had the most filthy and unheard-of custom, of injecting the wine of their country, by means of hollow canes, into their bodies, in the same way we should take a clyster. Various other vices and abominations were practised among them; and every man took as many wives as he liked.

We, the few veteran Conquistadores who escaped alive from the battles and perils we encountered, succeeded, with the aid of God, to turn these people aside from their abominations. It was through our exertions they began to lead a more moral life, and that the holy doctrine was introduced among them. We were the persons who made this good beginning, and it was not until two years later, when we had made the conquest, and introduced good morals and better manners among the inhabitants, that the pious Franciscan brothers arrived, and three or four years after the virtuous monks of the Dominican order, who further

continued the good work, and spread Christianity through the country. The first part of the work, however, next to the Almighty, was done by us, the true Conquistadores, who subdued the country; and by the Brothers of Charity, who accompanied us. To us and them are due the merit and praise of sowing the first seeds of Christianity among these tribes: for when the beginning is good, the continuation and completion are sure to prove praiseworthy!

But enough of this; I will now speak of the great advantages which the inhabitants of New Spain derived from our exertions in their behalf.

CHAPTER CCIX

How we introduced the Christian religion among the Indians; of their conversion and baptism; and of the different trades we taught them.

After we had abolished idolatry and other abominations from among the Indians, the Almighty blessed our endeavours and we baptized the men, women, and all the children born after the conquest, whose souls would otherwise have gone to the infernal regions. With the assistance of God, and by a good regulation of our most Christian monarch, of glorious memory, Don Carlos, and of his excellent son Don Philip, our most happy and invincible king, to whom may God grant a long life and an increase of territory, several pious monks of different orders arrived in New Spain, who travelled from place to place, preached the gospel to the inhabitants, and baptized new-born infants. By their unremitted exertions Christianity became planted in their hearts, so that the inhabitants came to the confessional once every year; and those who were better instructed in our Christian faith received the holy communion. Their churches are very richly ornamented with altars, crucifixes, candelabras, different-sized chalices, censers, and everything else required in our religious ceremonies, all of pure silver. The more wealthy townships have the vestments of choristers, the chasuble and the full canonicals of a priest, mostly of velvet damask or silk, and of various colours and manufacture. The flags which hang to the crosses are of silk, and richly ornamented with gold and pearls. The funeral crosses are covered with satin, and bear the figure of a death's head and cross bones; the funeral palls, in some townships, are also more or less splendid. The churches are likewise provided with a set of bells, have a regular band of choristers, besides flutes, dulcimers, clarions, and sacbuts, and some have even organs. I do believe there

are more large and small trumpets in the province of Guatimala, where I am writing this, than in my native country Old Castile. It is indeed wonderful, and we cannot thank God too much for it, to behold the Indians assisting in the celebration of the holy mass, which they particularly do in those places where the Franciscan friars or the Brothers of Charity officiate at the altar.

It was also a great blessing for the Indians that the monks taught them to say their prayers in their own language, and frequently to repeat them. The monks have altogether so accustomed them to reverence everything relating to religion, that they never pass by any altar or cross without falling down on their knees and repeating a Pater Noster or an Ave Maria. We also taught the Indians to make wax lights for the holy service, for, previous to our arrival, they made no manner of use of their wax. We taught them to be so obedient and respectful to the monks and priests, that whenever one of these religious men approach a township the bells are rung, and the inhabitants go out to meet him with wax-lights in their hands; and they always give him a hospitable reception. On the day of Corpus Christi, the birth of Mary, and on other saint-days, when we are accustomed to form processions, the inhabitants of the districts surrounding Guatimala likewise march out in procession with crucifixes, lighted candles, and carry about their tutelar saint splendidly dressed up, all the time chanting hymns, accompanied by the sound of flutes and trumpets. The inhabitants have also learnt the different trades which are carried on in Spain, in a highly praiseworthy manner. They have regular workshops with all kinds of instruments, and earn a good livelihood by their industry; the gold and silver workers are particularly expert, as well in the smelting as in the hammering of these metals. The lapidaries and painters are also very clever, and the sculptors produce astonishing works of art with their emeralds and fine steel instruments. Among others, they sculpture the figure of our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, with all the expression of his suffering, in so exquisite a manner, that unless we had witnessed it with our own eyes we could not have thought Indians capable of doing it. If I might offer an opinion, I think, that neither the celebrated Apelles of ancient times, nor the great masters of our days, Berruguete[61] and Michael Angelo, nor even the more modern artist of Burgos, who is said to be a real Apelles, could produce such beautiful works of art with their fine pencils, as the celebrated Indian masters, Andreas de Aquino, Juan de la Cruz, and Crespello, with their emeralds. Besides this, the sons of the more distinguished chiefs of the country are well instructed

in our grammar, and the most reverend the archbishop of Mexico sees that this is strictly attended to. Several of these young men are not only able to read and write, but even compose whole books of choral songs. Numbers of Indians are also employed in weaving silks, satins, and taffetas. They manufacture all kinds of coarse woollen stuffs and mantles; there are also cloth manufacturers, wool-combers, fullers, hat-makers, and soap-makers, as good as those of Segovia and Cuenca; but they have not been able as yet to learn glass-blowing and the apothecaries' trade; however, they are so expert in all arts that no doubt they will soon master these also: though there are among them surgeons and herbarists. They are very expert at juggling, perform puppet-shows, and play on the guitar. Of agriculture they understood something before our arrival, but now also they attend to the breeding of all kinds of cattle. They plough with oxen, sow maise, bake biscuits, and have everywhere planted Spanish fruit trees, so that they already draw considerable profit from them. As the fruit of the peach tree is not wholesome, and the plantain tree throws too much shadow, they continually keep cutting them down, and plant in their stead quince, apple, and pear trees, which, in their estimation are of greater value.

We have also introduced among them good police and justice. In every township the Indians annually choose their alcaldes, regidors, accountants, alguacils, and other authorities; and they have a court-house where the authorities hear causes twice a week, and pronounce judgment in actions for debt and minor offences. Criminal cases and heavy offences are always referred to the governor or the royal court of audience, according to circumstances. I have been assured by credible persons that when the town councils of Tlascalla, Tezcuco, Cholulla, Huexotzinco, and of other great towns meet, the mace-bearers precede the civic authorities with golden staffs, the same as are carried before a viceroy; also that these Indian judges are as correct in the judgments they pronounce, and look quite as dignified as the judges in Spain, and that they assiduously study our laws and set a high value on them. All the caziques keep good establishments, they have their horses with beautiful saddles and trappings, and whenever they travel through the country are attended by numerous pages. In some townships even tilts, tournaments, and bull-fights take place among them, particularly on Corpus Christi day, the feast of St. John, St. Jacob, and of the Virgin Mary, in the month of August. Many Indians have even the courage to combat with the bulls, though these animals are so uncommonly fierce. Some of the most expert horsemen are to be found among them, particularly among the inhabitants

of Cheapa de los Indios. Most of the caziques breed their own horses and mules, which they employ in carrying goods for sale to the different markets,[62] and gain a livelihood as carriers to different parts of the country, in the same way as we do in Spain. In short they are uncommonly expert in all handicrafts, even to the making of tapestry. I must now close this, and relate what further advantages the Indians derived in the following chapter.

CHAPTER CCX.

Of other advantages which arose from our glorious conquests.

HAVING shown how many advantages the Indians derived from our glorious conquests, I must now speak about the gold, silver, precious stones, and other valuable matters, as cochineal, wool, sarsaparilla and cow-hides, which are annually exported to Spain; also of the monies arising from the royal fifths, and of the valuable presents which we forwarded to his majesty during the course of the conquest; in which, of course, are not included the quantity of valuable goods which merchants and travellers take with them. Certainly, since the time that the wise king Solomon built the holy temple of Jerusalem with the gold and silver of the islands of Tarshis, of Ophir and Saba, we find no mention made in any old histories of so much gold, silver, and of other riches, as are continually being exported from this country to Spain. Many thousands of pounds weight of gold and silver have indeed been also sent from Peru; but at the time we conquered New Spain the name of Peru was not even known, nor was it discovered till ten years after. We forwarded to his majesty presents of immense value from the very beginning, for which and other reasons I place New Spain at the head; for we very well know with regard to the affairs of Peru, that the captains, governors, and soldiers continually carried on civil wars with each other, in which the lives of many Spaniards were sacrificed. We, in New Spain, on the contrary, were never for a moment forgetful of the profound respect which was due to our emperor and master; nor will our fidelity ever be questioned, and whenever his majesty requires our services we are ready with our property and our lives to obey his commands.

Let the kind reader reflect but for one moment on the towns and villages which the Spaniards have already founded in these countries. Their number is so extensive, that I must pass them by in silence.

Seven bishoprics have already been erected in New Spain; the very celebrated city of Mexico is the see of an archbishop, and there are three royal courts of audience. The reader would be astonished to see the number of cathedrals, and the monasteries of the Brothers of Charity, and of the Franciscan, Dominican, and Augustin friars; the hospitals, with their endowments, and the church of our dear lady of Guadaloupe, at Tepeaquilla, where Sandoval was stationed during the siege of Mexico: also the holy miracles which have taken place in the country, and those which happen daily, are astonishing; and we cannot sufficiently thank God and the blessed Virgin, who gave us the power to conquer this country, where everything has already become so Christian. In Mexico there is an universal college, where grammar, rhetoric, logic, philosophy, theology, and other sciences and arts are taught. In this city even books are printed both in the Latin and Spanish languages, and here also licentiates and doctors graduate.

I could enumerate many other matters of great importance, and describe the numerous silver mines which are worked in New Spain, and the new ones that are daily being discovered, and from which Spain draws so much wealth; but I have stated sufficient to prove that our heroic deeds were never surpassed in any age, and that no men ever subdued so many kingdoms as we, the true Conquistadores, conquered for our emperor and master: and though there were many brave men among us, yet I was not the least among them, and now I am the oldest alive. I repeat it, I, I, I am the oldest, and I have always served his majesty like a good soldier. And here I must relate something after the manner of a dialogue. When illustrious Fame resounded from one end of the world to the other our glorious deeds of arms, and the important services which we had rendered to God, our emperor, and the whole of Christendom, she cried aloud, and said, that we were more justly entitled to and deserving of lucrative possessions than those who had neither rendered his majesty any services here nor in any other place. Where, she asks, are your palaces, castles, and escutcheons, to witness of your heroic deeds to posterity, like the escutcheons of so many illustrious families do of the deeds of their forefathers, but which have not surpassed yours? Where, inquired illustrious Fame, where are the Conquistadores, who escaped alive from all those battles; where are the tombs of those great heroes who fell in battle; where are their escutcheons?

I can answer this with few words: O, excellent and illustrious Fame, who art praised and desired by all good and virtuous men: the malice and envy of those who have sought to cast our heroic deeds into the

shade are not desirous of seeing you, nor even to hear your illustrious name mentioned, that you may not praise us according to our deserts. Know then, O Fame, that of the five hundred and fifty warriors who sailed with Cortes from Cuba, that there are now, in the year 1568, while I am writing this, only five of us alive, and that all the others were either captured by the Indians, and sacrified to their idols, or were killed in battle, or have since died in their beds! And with respect to their tombs, I say that the bellies of the Indians were their sepultures, and those parts of their flesh which the Indians did not eat themselves were thrown to the lions, tigers, and serpents, which were kept by the Mexicans in strong cages. These cages were their monuments and their escutcheons; and those who died so cruel a death, who rendered such important services to God and to their emperor, and who gave light to those who lived in darkness, ought to have had their names perpetuated in letters of gold; but they were never remunerated! They did not even obtain wealth, although this is the goal of all men!

Illustrious Fame then inquired after those who had arrived with Narvaez and Garay, and I answered her as follows: Narvaez's troops, without including the sailors, amounted to thirteen hundred men, of which only ten or twelve are now living, the greater part of the rest having fallen in the battles, or were captured by the Indians, and sacrificed. The troops of Garay, including those three companies which landed in San Juan de Ulua, previous to his own arrival, amounted, according to my computation, to about twelve hundred men, most of whom were captured by the Indians of Panuco, and their flesh devoured at their festive orgies Of the fifteen men who survived the expedition of Vasquez de Aillon to Florida, and joined our army, not a single man is now remaining!

I repeat, O illustrious Fame, that of Cortes' veteran troops there are only five of us alive, all of us far advanced in years, sickly, and very poor, with numbers of grown-up sons and daughters, and we are obliged to drag on a life of misery and toil, with scarcely enough to support our families! And now, O Fame, since I have told you everything you wished to know respecting our palaces, our escutcheons, and our tombs, lift up your excellent and honest voice, and resound our deeds of valour throughout the whole world, that malice and envy may no longer obscure their glory! This, Fame answered she would do with the greatest delight; but added, she was surprised that the best commendaries had not been presented to us, particularly as his majesty had issued commands to that effect. Illustrious Fame then went on to say, that the deeds of the courageous and spirited Cortes would always be considered inestimable, and might be compared to those of the most renowned

generals; but that the historians Gomara, doctor Illescas, and others, make all our discoveries and conquests redound to the honour of Cortes alone, and never so much as mention any of our names with praise; but at present she was delighted to find that I had written a faithful account of the conquest, without exaggeration or fulsome flattery, and not, as Gomara, in the praise of one officer alone. Fame then promised, in the goodness of her heart, that she would announce all this to the world; adding, that wherever my book was published persons would everywhere recognize in it impartiality and the naked truth.

A certain doctor, who is one of the members of the royal court of audience, once asked me, how it came that Cortes, in his despatches and during his personal interviews with his majesty, never strove to obtain anything for us, the true Conquistadores, though it was with our assistance he obtained the distinguished appointment of governor of New Spain? To this I answered, and must still answer, that when Cortes received the appointment of governor he immediately took the best commendaries to himself, and imagined that he would remain uncontrolled master of New Spain for life, and that the distribution of the commendaries would continue in his hands. He therefore considered that it would be superfluous to solicit anything for us, as he would have it in his own power to do what he liked; but after his majesty had given him a marquisate, his majesty refused to reappoint him governor: and so it happened that Cortes, in soliciting honours for himself, allowed the best opportunity to pass by of making some provision for us. It was certainly not his majesty's fault that our services were never rewarded; for when he was informed by several cavaliers of Mexico that Cortes had taken the best townships and districts of New Spain to himself, and had presented others to his relations and friends recently arrived from Spain, his majesty issued commands that Cortes' companions in arms should likewise be handsomely rewarded. Soon after this his majesty left, for Flanders, where he most probably lost sight of the matter altogether. If Cortes immediately after the conquest had divided the whole country into five equal parts, and had set one of these with the most lucrative townships apart for the crown, he would have done much better. Then he would have had one fifth and a half for the churches and cloisters, and for those cavaliers who had served in his majesty's armies in the campaigns of Italy, and those against the Moors and Turks; and the other two fifths and a half ought to have been distributed among the Conquistadores in perpetuity. This division would certainly have met with his majesty's approbation, particularly as the whole conquest never put the crown to any expense.

In the first times, moreover, we did not know before what tribunal we were to lay our complaints and petitions, and we accordingly put our whole trust in Cortes, as our general. It was not until we found that Montejo, by applying personally to his majesty in Spain, procured for himself the appointment of governor and chief justice of Yucatan, besides other rewards; and that Ordas, in a similar manner, obtained honours and lucrative commendaries for himself; and that Alvarado, after throwing himself at his majesty's feet, obtained the appointment of governor and chief justice of Guatimala and Chiapa, besides a gift of extensive lands; and that, lastly, Cortes was created a marquis, with the appointment of captain-general of New Spain and of the South Sea: it was not, I say, until we were taught experience by these facts, that we, the large body of the Conquistadores, likewise despatched agents to Spain, to obtain for us in perpetuity the commendaries that should become vacant. Our claims were then gone into, and pronounced to be just, and his majesty instructed the royal auditors, whom he despatched to Mexico, to consider the whole of the Indians of New Spain as if they had not yet been distributed, and they were to deprive all those of their possessions whom Cortes had so richly remunerated; that the most lucrative commendaries were to be distributed among the veteran Conquistadores, and all the remainder to be retained in the patronage of the crown. But all this ended in smoke, as the very men whom his majesty intrusted to carry out his commands either died too soon, or were averse to the distribution of the commendaries in perpetuity; for they readily perceived how soon their power and influence in the country would be at an end if they carried out this measure. I must, however, do Nuño de Guzman and the other auditors the justice to say, that whenever there were any commendaries vacant, they always first remembered the Conquistadores, though their conduct was rather harsh towards the Indian population. However, these auditors were very soon deprived of all power, by the disputes in which they became involved with Cortes, and the abuse they made in the marking of slaves.

In the following chapter I will give some further account of the question respecting a distribution of the Indians in perpetuity.

CHAPTER CCXI.

The deliberations which took place at Valladolid in the year 1550, *in the royal council of the Indies, respecting the distribution of Indians in perpetuity.*

In the year 1550, the licentiate de la Gasca came from Peru to the court, which was then residing at Valladolid. He was accompanied by a monk of the Dominican order, named father Martin, who was regent of his order, and whom his majesty soon after appointed to the bishopric of las Charcas. At the same time there appeared at the court the bishop of Chiapa, Don Bartolomé de las Casas; the bishop of Mechoacan, Don Vasco de Quiroga, and other cavaliers, who came as the representatives of New Spain and Peru; and also certain hidalgos, against whom several accusations had been brought. To this meeting I was also cited, as the oldest of the Conquistadores. The reason for assembling this council was as follows: De la Gasca, and those who accompanied him from Peru, had brought along with them a large quantity of gold, partly their own, and partly belonging to the crown. This gold was forwarded to Augsburg, in Germany, where his majesty was then staying with our present most fortunate king Don Philip, his beloved son, to whom God grant a long life. Several cavaliers repaired with this gold, in order at the same time to present themselves to his majesty as deputies from the Spanish settlers in Peru, and also to beg of him to grant us commendaries in perpetuity, in reward for the services we had rendered to the crown. A petition to the same effect had been laid before his majesty by Gonzalo Lopez, Alonso de Villanueva, and other cavaliers, who had purposely been deputed from New Spain.

Shortly after the arrival of the licentiate De la Gasca in Spain, the see of Palencia became vacant, and the emperor, it was said, had given it to this licentiate in remuneration for his having restored tranquillity to Peru, and for his having regained possession of the gold and silver which had been stolen by the Contreras.

With respect to the petition of distributing commendaries in perpetuity, his majesty appointed a commission to inquire into its merits, and as to what would be the best possible manner of carrying it into effect. The following were the gentlemen appointed: the marquis of Mondejar as president of the council of the Indies, the licentiates Gutierre Velasquez and Tello de Sandoval, the doctor Hernan Perez de la Fuente, the licentiates Gregorio, Lopez, and Briviesca; and the

doctor Riberadeneyra, auditors of the royal council of the Indies; and besides, there were several others of his majesty's privy councillors.

This distinguished body of prelates and cavaliers met together in the residence of Pedro Gonzalez de Leon, where the council of the Indies hold their sittings, and began to deliberate on the subject of the distribution of commendaries in perpetuity in New Spain, Peru, and if I mistake not, also in New Granada and Bobotan. The reasons which were adduced for carrying this into effect were indeed just and Christian. For it was said, among other things, that those Indians who were distributed in perpetuity would receive better treatment; would be more thoroughly instructed in the Christian doctrine, be attended in sickness as children, and their lives would be altogether made more comfortable to them. It would be an incitement also for those who possessed commendaries to attend more to agriculture and the breeding of cattle. The endless lawsuits about the possession of Indians would cease altogether; no inspectors would be further required in the townships; and the soldiers would live in peace and friendship with each other as soon as they found that the presidents and governors durst no longer distribute the vacant commendaries among their relations for party purposes, as was too often the case. Besides which, if perpetual distribution were carried into effect, and the commendaries were solely given to men who had rendered services to the crown, his majesty's real views would not only be carried out, but it would be an effectual means of dispossessing the crew of vagabonds in Peru of the lands they had unjustly seized, and put it out of their power to create further dissensions.

After this august body had well argued these points pro and con, the several deputies and we, the other cavaliers, were required to give our opinion, and the greater part voted for the distribution in perpetuity.

Of those who were opposed to it the bishop of Chiapa was first and foremost, and was supported by his colleague, brother Rodrigo, of the Dominican order, the new bishop of Palencia, de la Gasca, the marquis de Mondejar, and by two auditors of the royal council of the Indies. These prelates, in opposition to the opinion of all the above-mentioned cavaliers, (with the exception of the marquis de Mondejar, who refused to pronounce in favour either of the one or the other party, merely listening to what each had to say, and to see which way the majority would go,) declared that the Indians should not be distributed in perpetuity, and that they should be compelled to deprive many persons of their Indians, who at present derived considerable incomes from them; though, in the first instance even, they had been more de-

serving of punishment than of reward. This was particularly the case in Peru, they said, where peace would be maintained if these views were carried out; for it was to be feared that the troops there would rise up in open insurrection, if they found no further distribution of Indians was to be allowed.

To this the bishop of Mechoacan, who was on our side, answered, by asking the licentiate de la Gasca, why, instead of punishing all the thieves and vagabonds, whose infamous practices were notorious to the world, he had even presented them with additional Indians?

To this the licentiate smilingly replied: "Indeed, I considered, gentlemen, that it was no little matter for me to maintain peace there, and that I escaped with my life, after I had deprived so many persons of their possessions and punished them as the law required."

After a good deal of further speechifying pro and con, we, supported by several others who were present, proposed that the distribution in perpetuity should at least be carried into effect in New Spain, though only for the benefit of the true Conquistadores, who sailed from Cuba with Cortes, and those of Narvaez's and Garay's troops, who were still living. Of the Conquistadores, we added, there were but few remaining, for the greater part had lost their lives in battle in the service of their monarch. The services which we had rendered to the crown fully merited such distinction; the other troops could be rewarded in some other way.

As the commissioners could not come to any decision among themselves on this point, some of the prelates and royal auditors proposed that the matter should be laid at rest until his majesty returned to Spain, as it was necessary that the emperor should himself be present in discussing a matter of so much importance. We others, the bishop of Mechoacan, and several of the cavaliers present said, however, that the majority, as far as regarded New Spain, had declared in favour of the distribution in perpetuity, and that our affairs must not be mixed up with those of Peru; that it was also very evident, from the commands which his majesty issued in appointing the commission, that he was in favour of this measure. However, all the arguments we adduced, all we might say with regard to the important services we had rendered to the crown was to no purpose; the auditors of the royal council of the Indies, the bishop las Casas, and brother Rodrigo persisted in their opinion, and added, that on his majesty's return from Germany, the Conquistadores would be rewarded in such a manner that they would never find cause of complaint hereafter.

Intelligence as to how this matter had terminated was brought to

New Spain by the very next vessel, and the Conquistadores determined to despatch procuradores in their own name to his majesty. I had again returned to Guatimala about this time, when Andreas de Tapia, Pedro Moreno Medrano, and Juan Limpias Carbajal wrote to me on the subject of our memorial, in which I was mentioned as one of the oldest of the Conquistadores. I then communicated with the other Conquistadores staying in Guatimala, desiring them to subscribe what they could to defray the expenses of our procuradores. We could not, however, raise sufficient money for the purpose, and it was therefore determined that the citizens of Mexico should join us in this matter, that we might despatch our procuradores in common; but this also came to nothing, and thus matters remained until our invincible king, Don Philip, whom God grant a long life, made certain regulations in favour of the Conquistadores and their children; and also of the oldest settlers who had families, as may be seen by the royal decrees which were issued.

CHAPTER CCXII.

Of various remarks which were made respecting my history, which the reader will be pleased to hear.

After I had completed this my history, two licentiates called upon me and begged permission of me to peruse it, in order that they might acquaint themselves better with the history of the conquest of Mexico and of New Spain, and that they might judge for themselves in how far my history differed from the representations which Francisco Lopez de Gomara and doctor Illescas have given of the heroic deeds of the marquis del Valle Oaxaca. As ignorant persons, like myself, always learn something from men of learning, I gave it to them, but under the condition that they should neither add nor take anything away from it; as everything I had related was conformable to truth. When the licentiates had read through the whole of my work, one of them who was a great rhetorician, said he was astonished at the sharpness of my memory, that I should not even have forgotten one single circumstance of the many things that had taken place from my first voyage of discovery under Cordoba down to the present time. With respect to my style of writing, both remarked, that it was plain old Castilian, which was more agreeable at that time than those embellished sentences which are generally affected by historians; and that

though my style was plain it was rendered beautiful by the truth which it contained. They were, however, of opinion that I had written too conspicuously about myself, in describing the battles at which I was present, and that I should have left this to others. I ought also, they said, to have quoted other historians to confirm my statements, instead of dryly saying: This I did, This happened to me; for, added they, I was only witnessing for myself. To this I replied, and said as follows: "In certain despatches which Cortes forwarded to the emperor from Mexico in the year 1540, my name and the services I had rendered to the crown were also mentioned, and how I had made two former voyages of discovery to New Spain." In these despatches Cortes spoke as an eyewitness of my conduct in the many battles we fought with the Mexicans, of the courage I had evinced on every occasion, of the many wounds I had received in the numerous engagements, and also how I had accompanied him on the expedition to the Honduras, and said besides several other things in my praise, which it would be tedious to enumerate here. The illustrious viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza, wrote in a similar strain to his majesty respecting the officers who were then serving in New Spain. His accounts agreed perfectly with those of Cortes; and lastly, I myself in the year 1540 gave the royal council of the Indies sufficient proofs in confirmation of what both had said. But should you senores licentiates, continued I, not feel satisfied with such witnesses as the viceroy and Cortes, and with the proofs I have myself adduced, I can bring forward another witness, who must have greater weight than any other in the world, I mean the emperor Charles the Fifth himself, who, by one of his royal letters bearing his own seal, addressed to the viceroys and presidents, commands that I and my sons shall be munificently rewarded for the many important services which I have rendered to the crown. I myself possess the original letters containing these commands. But if you wish for any further witness, behold the territory of New Spain, which is thrice the size of old Spain; count the numbers of towns and settlements which have all been founded by Spaniards, and sum up the wealth which is continually passing from this portion of the new world to Spain. Another reason why I have written this true account is, because the historians Illescas and Gomara never mention a word in our praise, but give to Cortes alone all the glory of our conquests. If they had been honestly inclined they would not have passed us, the Conquistadores, by in silence; a share of Cortes' heroic deeds is also due to me, for in all his battles I fought among the first; besides that, I was present in so many other engagements in the provinces under his

officers, as you must have seen in the course of this history. I can also claim my share of the inscription which Cortes put on the silver culverin, we called the phœnix, and which Cortes sent a present to his majesty from Mexico. The inscription ran thus:

This bird was born without its equal,
As a servant I have not my second,
And you have not your equal in this world.

And when Cortes, on his first return to Spain spoke to his majesty of the courageous officers and soldiers who had served under him in the Mexican wars, I was also included in this number. Cortes also took frequent opportunities of speaking to his majesty in our praise during the unfortunate expedition against Algiers, and of this praise a part was also due to me; for I lent also my assistance in the conquest.

This was my reply to the two licentiates; but with respect to the reproach they made me of having spoken too much in my own praise, and that all this self-praise would have come with a better grace from others, I desired them to bear in mind, that there are indeed certain virtues and excellent qualities which we ought never to praise in ourselves, but let our neighbours do it for us; but how is it possible for a neighbour to mention anything in the praise of another if he was not present at the battle with him? Are the sparrows, said I, to speak of it, who flew over our heads during the engagements? or the clouds, that floated on high? Who can speak better about it than we, the officers and soldiers, the men who themselves fought the battles? Your reproach, gentlemen, would have been very just, continued I, if in my history you had found that I had withheld the praise that was due to the officers and soldiers who were my companions in arms, and I had claimed all the honour to myself; but I have not even said so much in my own praise as I could, and indeed ought to have done; but I write that my name may not be forgotten. Here I feel tempted to make a comparison, though it is between a very great man and a poor soldier like myself; which is, if historians relate of the imperator and celebrated general Julius Cæsar, that he fought fifty-three battles, I may say that I fought in many more battles than Julius Cæsar, as may be seen from my narrative. Historians also say of Julius Cæsar how courageous he was, and always ready for battle at a moment's notice, and how he devoted his nights in writing down his valorous deeds with his own hand; for though there were numbers of historians, he would not trust his fame in their hands. It should therefore be no matter of surprise

to any one, when I mention a few words about myself, in describing the battles at which I was present, that future generations may say: this Bernal Diaz del Castillo wrote, in order that his children and descendants might share in the praise of his heroic deeds, in the same way as the fame of those heroes of old has been handed down in their escutcheons to their latest posterity.

I will not, however, say anything further on this head; for what I have already said will not be relished by malice and envy, who will be of opinion that I have praised myself too much. What I have said of myself has, so to say, happened but yesterday, and not centuries ago, as the exploits of the Romans. There are still sufficient of the Conquistadores living to confirm what I have related. If they found any untruths, or even any obscure passage, they would not allow it to pass unnoticed. However, it is so in the world; malice always maligns truth. I will now enumerate in their regular order all the battles at which I was present, from the first discovery of New Spain, down to the pacification of the whole country, in order that the reader may have a short and clear view of them all at once; however, there were many hostile rencontres at which I was not present, either because I was wounded or knocked up with fatigue, or while the provinces were so numerous, that we were obliged to march out against them in different bodies.

The first was the pretty sharp conflict at the Punta de Cotoche, during my first voyage of discovery, under Cordoba. Next followed the severe battle at Champoton, where we lost the half of our troops; I myself was dangerously wounded, and our captain had two severe wounds, of the consequences of which he died.

On our return to Cuba, when we landed on the coast of Florida in search of water, we had another sharp conflict, in which I was wounded, and one of our men was carried off alive by the Indians.

In the expedition under Grijalva, we fought a second battle in Champoton, on the same spot; ten of our men were killed, and Grijalva himself wounded.

In the third expedition under Cortes, I was present at the following engagements:

The two battles on the Tabasco, subsequently called the river Grijalva.

The battle of Tzinpantzinco.

A few days after, the three pitched battles against the Tlascallans.

The conspiracy and chastisement of the inhabitants of Cholulla.

Entrance into Mexico, and seizure of the person of Motecusuma. I do not count this exactly among the battles, yet it was a bold step to take so mighty a cazique prisoner.

The great victory over Narvaez, whose troops amounted to nearly 1400; we were only 226 in number.

On our return to Mexico, to the relief of Alvarado, we were attacked by the whole armed force of Mexico. The battles continue, without intermission, for eight days and nights. I will, however, say, that I only fought six battles during this time. We lost 860 of our troops.

The battle of Otumpan, and that in our expedition to the province of Tepeaca.

The expedition against Tezcuco, where, in the two battles we fought, I was each time severely wounded in the throat by the thrust of a lance.

Two battles against the Mexicans, on our march to the assistance of some townships in the province of Tezcuco. These battles were respecting the possession of some maise fields.

Second campaign of Mexico, and our battles against the wild tribes of the marquis mountains. Here we had eight men killed, and the whole of us were in the utmost danger.

The battle of Quauhnahuac.

The three battles of Xochimilco, where likewise we stood in great danger, and four of our men were killed.

The siege of Mexico, which lasted ninety-three days, during the whole of which time the battles continued, almost without intermission, day and night. Here I may, at least, say that I fought in eighty severe engagements and skirmishes.

Expeditions to the provinces of Guacasualco, Chiapa, and Zapoteca. Here we fought three battles, and I was also at the taking of Chiapa.

The two conflicts near Chamula and Quitlan.

The two similar rencontres near Teapa and Cimatan. Here I lost two of my companions, and was myself severely wounded in the throat.

I had almost forgotten to mention that, in our disastrous retreat from Mexico, we were continually attacked, for the space of nine days, by the enemy, and we fought four severe battles with them.

Expedition to the Honduras and Higueras, in which two years and three months elapsed before we again reached Mexico. Near the township of Culacotu we fought a severe engagement, in which I lost my horse, which had cost me 600 pesos.

On my return to Mexico, I assisted in putting down the insurrection of the Zatopecs and Minges.

I do not mention several other hostile rencontres, for I should find neither any end to them, nor to the numerous perils I encountered. Neither must I omit to mention that I was among the first who stood before Mexico when we were about to commence the siege. Cortes

himself did not take up his station till five days after. I was also one of those who destroyed the aqueduct of Chapultepec, by which the Mexicans were deprived of fresh water.

If we sum up all this together, it will be found that I have, at least, been in 119 battles and hostile rencontres: not that I exactly wish to praise myself by stating this; but it is truth what I have written, and my history is not a book of old traditions, or account of things that happened in ancient times among the Romans; neither does it contain poetical fictions, but a faithful narrative of the important and remarkable services which we rendered to the Almighty, to our emperor, and to the whole of Christianity.

Praise and thanks be to the Lord Jesus Christ, who preserved me in so many perils, and that at present I have the power to write all this with such clearness! And I can, indeed, boast that I have been in as many battles as historians relate of the emperor Henry the Fourth.

CHAPTER CCXIII.

Of the planets and signs in the heavens which prognosticated our arrival in New Spain; how these were interpreted by the Mexicans; and of other matters.

The Mexicans relate that, shortly before our arrival in New Spain, there appeared a figure in the heavens of a circular form, like a carriage wheel, the colours of which were a mixture of green and red. Shortly after a second, of a similar form, made its appearance, which moved towards the rising of the sun, and joined the first. Motecusuma, who at that time sat upon the throne of Mexico, assembled his priests and soothsayers, and desired them to watch, and explain to him these wonderful signs, which had never been seen before. The priests accordingly communicated with their god Huitzilopochtli, who answered, that they portended dreadful wars and horrible pestilence, and that it was necessary to sacrifice some human beings.

Shortly after these signs had been seen in the heavens we arrived in New Spain, and ten months after Narvaez came, and brought with him a negro, who was ill with the smallpox. From this person the disease spread among the inhabitants of Sempoalla, and thence, like a true pestilence, throughout the whole of New Spain.

When, subsequently, we fought the severe battles during the night

of sorrows, and lost 550 of our men, who were either killed in our retreat or taken prisoners, and sacrificed to the Mexican idols, the interpretations which the priests had given of the signs were considered perfectly correct. These signs were not seen by any of us, but I have related this exactly as told by the Mexicans, for it is so described in their hieroglyphic writing, which we always found correct.

The following appearance I beheld with my own eyes, which any one else might have seen if he had taken the trouble of looking up. In the year 1527 there appeared in the heavens a sign, which had the shape of a long sword, and seemed as if it stood between the province of Panuco and the town of Tezcuco, and remained unchanged in the heavens for the space of twenty days. The Mexicans and their papas declared it was a sign of some pestilence, and certainly a few days after the measles, and another eruptive disease, like leprosy, broke out, which was accompanied by a very nauseous smell, and carried off numbers of persons, though it did not prove so destructive as the smallpox.

In the year 1528 a very heavy rain fell in Guacasualco, with large clods of earth. But this phenomena differed from what had been seen before of the kind, for as soon as these clods touched the ground they turned into innumerable frogs, a little larger in size than the bluebottle fly. The earth was completely covered with these creatures, which hopped about in various directions, to gain the river, which was not far off. As, however, there were myriads of them, and the sun burning hot, numbers of them perished before they could reach the water. The birds of prey certainly devoured great numbers, yet many of them still remained on the ground, and soon turned putrid, spreading a most dreadful stench around.

I have likewise been assured by credible persons that similar showers of frogs fell at Sempoalla, in the neighbourhood of the sugar mills, belonging to the accountant Albornoz.

I should not have noticed this raining of frogs if it were not something of rare occurrence, a thing which the greater part of mankind never see; moreover, celebrated men have said a writer should only notice those things which are truly wonderful. I was also assured by a cavalier of distinction, who resides in the neighbourhood of this town, named Juan de Guzman, that he himself was once caught in a shower of this kind, on his journey through Yucatan. He assured me that a number of such small frogs stuck frozen to his and his companions' cloaks, and they were even obliged to shake them off.

About the same time that this happened to Guzman, it also rained frogs in Guatimala, as I have been assured by my fellow-townsman

Cosmo Roman. The most awful occurrence, however, took place in Guatimala, in the month of September, of the year 1541. Here a most terrific hurricane arose, accompanied by torrents of rain, which continued incessantly for the space of three days, and so vast was the quantity of water that came pouring down, that the crater of the volcano, which lies about four miles from the town of Guatimala, literally burst, and so terrific was the volume of water that came rolling down the mountain, that numbers of huge stones and trees were carried along with it. Those who did not witness it themselves will scarcely credit this, for there were masses of rock carried down by the flood which two oxen could not move, and these blocks of stone were left there as a memento of this fearful tempest. Every tree was torn up by the roots, and hurried down the precipices by the impetuosity of the torrent. The water had exactly the colour as if it had been mixed with chalk, and by the immense power of the hurricane it was raised into foaming billows. The noise occasioned by the rushing of the wind and water was so terrific, that persons could not hear each other speak, and fathers were unable to render their sons any assistance.

This direful tempest commenced at ten o'clock on Sunday evening, of the 11th of September, and the whole body of water, stones, and trees came rolling along over the half of the town of Guatimala, crumbling down the houses in its progress, strongly built as they were. A great number of men, women, and children perished in a few moments, and everything they possessed was lost. Some houses which had withstood the torrent were blocked up to the topmost windows by mud, pieces of rock, and large trees. During this tempest, also, Doña Beatriz de la Cueva, the wife of Pedro de Alvarado, perished, with several other ladies, who had fled to the chapel, to supplicate the Almighty in prayer to preserve them from destruction in the tempest. The water and mud rushed with such impetuosity into the chapel, that it soon gave way, and only three ladies escaped, one of whom was Alvarado's daughter; the names of the two others I have forgotten. This young lady, whose name was Leonora, was fortunately rescued from her perilous situation, between scattered trees and heaps of stone, and is now the wife of the distinguished cavalier Don Francisco de la Cueva, by whom she has several fine sons and daughters.

Many persons declared that they heard during this tempest a fearful kind of howling, yelling, and whistling, and maintained that numbers of evil spirits came rolling along with the large pieces of rock; for it would not have been possible for the water of itself to have moved those heavy masses of stone and large trees. In the midst of this flood people

also said they saw a cow with one horn, and two monstrous-looking men, like negroes, with horrible countenances, who kept crying out in a loud voice: "*Go on! Go on! For all must be destroyed!*" If the inhabitants looked out of their doors or windows to watch the torrent, they were seized with such sudden dread, that they fled from their houses from one street to another, and were at length carried off by the flood, or sinking into the mud, were hurried with it into the neighbouring river. The Indians who lived further down the country, in the direction in which this mass of water, mud, stones, and trees was moving, fared much worse, for they were all drowned. May God have mercy on their souls!

I have above related that this dreadful tempest was looked upon as a punishment for the blasphemous expression which the disconsolate widow of Alvarado was said to have uttered at the intelligence of her husband's death. However, I have often been assured since I have resided in Guatimala, that this lady never gave utterance to the sinful expressions of which she has been accused, but that she merely said: "She wished she had perished with her husband."

I must not omit to observe that the stones which were rolled down with the flood are of such magnitude, that when any stranger comes to Guatimala, they are always pointed out to him, and he is quite astounded at the sight.

After this unfortunate occurrence the inhabitants burned all the dead bodies they could find; but they themselves durst no longer take up their abode in the town, and the greater part retired to their possessions in the country, or built huts in the fields. At length, however, they determined to build the present town, which now stands where formerly maise was grown. But I cannot say much in praise of the site that was chosen. It would have been much preferable if choice had been made of Petapa, or of the valley of Chimaltenango, both of which places are better situated for commerce. Each time the river overflows its banks the town is in danger, while earthquakes are of very frequent occurrence.[63]

After this destructive tempest, the late bishop, of pious memory, and several other cavaliers instituted an annual solemn procession, which was to take place on the 11th of September. This procession, composed of the clergy and of all the inhabitants of the town, set out from the principal church, under chant of sacred hymns, to the spot where the old town stood, and then entered the church, which on this day was decorated with green boughs and cloth, and a solemn funeral mass was performed for those who had perished in the tempest. After

which funeral ornaments were placed on the graves of the more distinguished with lighted wax torches, and an offering was made of bread, meat, and other things, according to the quality of the person interred. After the funeral mass a sermon was preached, and the late bishop not only followed in the procession himself, but he likewise left a fund for celebrating the mass for the dead on the anniversary of this day of sorrows. After these religious ceremonies, those who formed the procession enjoyed themselves in the gardens and the fields of the neighbourhood, and feasted off the plentiful provisions which they had brought along with them, in the same manner as it is done in Spain on similar occasions.

What I have related of this deluge I have taken from the memorials of the late bishop, who was accustomed to note down every curious phenomena of nature which he himself witnessed in this neighbourhood; besides which, I have heard all this confirmed by eyewitnesses. But the procession I have been describing is no longer continued, as the fund left by the late bishop, according to the assurances of the priests and dignitaries of the church of Guatimala, is not sufficient to meet the expenses.

NOTES TO THE SECOND VOLUME.

[1] Cortes, in his despatches, thus enumerates his troops, 40 horse, 550 foot soldiers, among whom there were 80 musketeers and crossbowmen; 8 or 9 field-pieces and a small supply of powder. (p. 1.)

[2] This king was also called Cohuanacotzin, subsequently he became a convert to Christianity, and took the name of Don Fernando. (p. 3.)

[3] His Indian name was Ixtlilxuchitl, and his Spanish, Don Hernando Pimentel, not Cortes. (p. 5.)

[4] His real name was Necahuatpiltzintli. (p. 5.)

[5] Calpullalpan. (p. 15.)

[6] Several Spanish writers make the number of Tlascallan warriors who accompanied this transport, amount to 180,000; but this is no doubt an excessive exaggeration. Here again the honesty of Bernal Diaz is conspicuous, who never multiplies numbers. (p. 17.)

[7] Teutepil and Ayutecatl were their proper names. (p. 17.)

[8] Torquemada, who himself saw this canal, says it was full two miles in length. (p. 18.)

[9] Gomara calls this place Accapichtlan; Torquemada, Yacapichtla. (p. 29.)

[10] Gomara most likely followed Cortes' despatches, where we find that the stream was coloured with the blood of the Indians, to the distance of four miles. (p. 30.)

[11] Indian servants. (p. 32.)

[12] Our old soldier has, "Unas bulas de senor S. Pedro," a bull of St. Peter. (p. 32.)

[13] There were four vessels which arrived on this occasion, carrying 200 Spaniards and 80 horses. (p. 33.)

[14] According to Torquemada this garden was eight miles in circumference, through the midst of which flowed a small rivulet, whose banks were decorated with all kinds of shrubbery. Besides the many beautiful buildings which it contained there were also artificial rocks. (p. 40.)

[15] The Mexican name is Quauhnahuac, where Cortes subsequently built himself a palace. (p. 41.)

[16] According to Cortes' despatches, the Indians made use of these words, which are indeed more intelligible than our author's: "They had sought our friendship thus late, because they thought they were bound first to atone for their guilt by allowing us to inflict some punishment upon them, after which they thought we should not be so embittered against them." (p. 42.)

[17] According to Torquemada, who was born in Mexico, and was elected provincial of his order by a chapter held at Xochimilco, the distance was sixteen miles. (p. 42.)

[17*] Torquemada here relates that Cortes was saved by a Tlascallan, and that the day following he made a fruitless search for him among the dead. (p. 44.)

[18] The following is a free translation of the first six lines:

"Pensive and sad brave Cortes stood
Surrounded by his valiant band,
His thoughts were in the heaviest mood,
While musing on Tlacupa's land,
Grief must assume an attitude,
Forehead and side were clasped by either hand."

Of the four following lines Bernal Diaz only gives the first two, the last two I have taken from Las Casas, (Brevissima Relacion de la destrucyon de las Indias.) These lines were most likely applied to Cortes after the attack he made upon the Cholullans:

On the Tarpeian rock as Nero stood
To view the flames consume th' imperial city,
Both young and old uttered their grief aloud,
But Nero neither showed remorse nor pity. (p. 52.)

[19] According to Torquemada there were 300 concerned in this conspiracy, and their intention was to elect Francisco Verdugo, brother-in-law to the governor of Cuba, captain-general in Cortes' stead; but adds that Verdugo, who was very courageous and highly esteemed, was not let into the conspiracy. (p. 55.)

[20] According to Cortes, this canal was two miles long, twice the breadth of a man's length, and as deep. It was completed in fifty days by 8000 Indians. (p. 55.)

[21] Herrera (Historia Gen. de las Indias) gives another reason for the younger Xicotencatl's return to Tlascalla. He says, that Alonso Ojeda had given a relation of Xicotencatl, named Piltectetl, who had been shamefully ill used by the Spaniards, leave to return home, but as Xicotencatl was jealous of this man on account of some love affair, he also secretly decamped for Tlascalla. (p. 61.)

[22] Torquemada remarks that, though the younger Xicotencatl was a man of uncommon bravery, his courage failed him when he saw the hour of death approaching. However, this is hardly to be credited, for it is quite contrary to the Indian character. (p. 62.)

[23] Cortes, in his despatches, tries to throw all the blame of this unfortunate attack upon the royal treasurer. (p. 81.)

[24] Respecting this slimy substance, called by the Mexicans Tecuitlatl, see a former note, first vol. (p. 95.)

[25] Bernal Diaz further remarks, (which we thought better to insert here,) that his complexion was fairer than that of the Indians in general; that he was above twenty-three years of age, and that he had a beautiful wife, daughter of his uncle Motecusuma. (p. 98.)

[26] So the Spaniards called the famous general Gonsalo de Cordova. Our old soldier is generally very satirical when he speaks about the boasted campaigns of Italy. (p. 106.)

[27] The battle of Garigliano, by which Cordova decided the fate of the kingdom of Naples. (p. 106.)

[28] Yet Torquemada assures us that mothers had eaten of the flesh of their own offspring. (p. 112.)

[29] The Spaniards at length, it would appear, took little notice of this barbarous custom of eating human flesh, so common among the Indians. Even here we see it is mentioned very coolly by Bernal Diaz. Human flesh certainly formed part of the provisions which Indian warriors carried with them when going out to battle. Both Gomara and Torquemada mention, that when Sandoval had defeated the warriors of Matlaltzinco, he found among their baggage a quantity of maise and numbers of roasted children. (p. 114.)

[30] All accounts agree in laying the guilt of this inhuman act to the door of the crown officers. Cruelty formed no part of Cortes' character, yet he will always be reproached for having yielded up his better feelings on this occasion to satisfy the rapacity of others. To the honour of the Spanish name, I must here add, that Torquemada most distinctly remarks, that the whole of Cortes troops openly showed their disgust of this infamous deed. (p. 117.)

[31] We have mentioned in a former note that this wine was made from the Agava Americana. To this day it is the common drink of the inhabitants of New Spain. (p. 129.)

[32] Most likely the Chalchicoeca river, for under this name Torquemada comprehends the coast district south of the Islas de Sacrificios. Monarch. Ind. iv. (p. 140.)

[33] Hibueras and not Higueras. Honduras and Hibueras were the original names given to the coast districts along the bay of the same name. For further information, see Monarch. Ind. iii, 41. (p. 173.)

[34] Christobal de Oli set sail from Vera Cruz early in April of the year 1523. (p. 175.)

[35] Bernal Diaz calls this pope Andriano de Lobayna, but he was not elected to the papal throne until the year following. (p. 195.)

[36] The author calls this Flemish nobleman, Monsieur de Lasoa, the same who performed so conspicuous a part during the early part of the young emperor's reign. (p. 195.)

[37] The emperor arrived in Spain in the month of June 1522, at the same time that Pope Adrian the Sixth repaired to Rome to take possession of the papal throne. (p. 197.)

[38] This nobleman the emperor had appointed commander-in-chief of his troops in Spain; but all his operations were attended with little success, and he lost all influence at court. (p. 198.)

[39] Bernal Diaz means the emperor's chancellor, Mercurin Arborio de Gattinara, who subsequently became a cardinal. (p. 200.)

[40] Most likely in the year 1523. (p. 207.)

[41] A town of Estremadura, and the native place of Cortes. (p. 212.)

[42] Gomara, who had been domestic chaplain in Cortes' family, says, that Cortes sent his father on this occasion 25,000 castellanas de oro, and 800 pounds weight of silver, but that it was seized by the emperor. (p. 219.)

[43] According to Gomara, several others had tried their wits to compose a verse for this field-piece, until Cortes himself engaged and hit upon those lines. Andreas de Tapia by way of joke proposed the following:

A questo tiro a mi ver
Muchos necios a de hazer.

[44] The liberties which Cortes granted to all those who built houses in Mexico, drew such vast crowds to the spot, that pestilential diseases broke out, which carried off numbers of human beings. The labourers, while at work, were enlivened by vocal and instrumental music. (p. 221.)

[45] The real name of this excellent man was Toribio de Benavente. When he first arrived in New Spain, the Indians thought his outward garments so mean that they continually cried out when they saw him, "Poor man! poor man!" As he was then unacquainted with their language, he inquired the meaning of the word "Motolinia," which they so often repeated; and, on being told what it was, he said, "Well, since this is the first word of the language which I learn, it shall in future be my name!" This monk was unremitting in his exertions to promote the welfare of the Indians, and he alone baptized above 400,000. (p. 222.)

[46*] According to Gomara and Herrera, Cortes left Mexico in October, 1524. (p. 235.)

[46] Herrera, who has otherwise merely transcribed Gomara's account of this expedition, has the following passage, which we do not find elsewhere: "Medrano, the hoboist," he says, "declared that, in order to still his hunger during this campaign, he ate of the brain and inside of Bernardo Caldero, and of those of a nephew of his, who was also a musician, and had died of hunger." I must here take the opportunity, owing to an omission in the print, of offering a few remarks on the execution of Quauhtemoctzin, and the king of Tlacupa.

Gomara, in his account of the expedition to the Honduras, positively asserts that Quauhtemoctzin and the other chiefs were guilty of this conspiracy, and says that they confessed it themselves, and were then tried by a court-martial, which passed sentence of death upon them. Torquemada, however, differs widely with Gomara; and, in speaking of the unfortunate end of Quauhtemoctzin, he has the following: "So this matter is related by Gomara and Herrera, but I find it differently represented in a history written in the Mexican language, and which I believe to be per-

fectly correct. While Cortes (the Mexican author says) was quartered in a certain township, the Mexican chiefs one evening began to discourse among themselves about the recent hardships they had suffered, and Cohuanacotzin said to Quauhtemoctzin, to Tetlepanquetzaltzin, and to other distinguished Mexicans, 'Thus you see, gentlemen, from kings we are become slaves, and we suffer ourselves to be led about by Cortes and this handful of Christians. If we were other people than we are, and would break through the promise we have made these Spaniards, we could play them a pretty trick here, and revenge ourselves upon them for all they have done to us, and the ill-treatment my cousin Quauhtemoctzin has suffered at their hands.' To this the Mexican monarch replied, 'I beg of you Cohuanacotzin to drop this subject, lest some one should overhear us, and imagine we were in earnest.' It appears (continues Torquemada) that they were indeed overheard, for the whole of this discourse was reported to Cortes by a low-minded Mexican of the lower classes." (p. 244.)

[47] With respect to the running or melting of the fat in the body causing instant death, it was most likely a notion entertained by the medical men of that day; the remark is, therefore, very excusable in an old soldier. (p. 255.)

[48] Probably the iguana, a species of lizard common to St. Domingo, where it is eaten, and considered delicate food. (p. 255.)

[49] Here our author has evidently erred, for Cortes left Mexico in the month of October, 1524, and the author repeatedly says that two years and three months were spent in this expedition; thus he cannot have returned until the year 1526. (p. 302.)

[50] Cortes must either have worn mourning for an uncommon length of time for his wife, or our author must have been misinformed when he says that she died a few months after her arrival in New Spain. (p. 327.)

[51] Bernal Diaz had forgotten the precise year, and says he arrived there in the month of May, 1536 or 1537. (p. 352.)

[52] The psydium pyriferum or pomiferum of Linnæus. (p. 352.)

[53] Bernal Diaz has fallen into an error here, for the meeting of the two monarchs at Aigues-Mortes was accidental, the emperor having been cast on the shore of Provence on a sea-voyage to Barcelona, and Francis the First, who happened to be in the neighbourhood at the time, kindly invited him to the place above mentioned. Neither was there any treaty of peace concluded between the two monarchs on this occasion, but an armistice for ten years had been agreed upon between them shortly beforehand, on the 18th of June, 1538. (p. 355.)

[54] This chapter 202 we may distinguish as the most uninteresting of all; it seems a mere jumble of facts thrown in anyhow; but the author himself remarks at the end of the chapter, "I relate all this merely from hearsay." (p. 357.)

[55] A little below, Bernal Diaz particularly mentions Cojohuacan. (p. 364.)

[56] Gomara agrees with Bernal Diaz as to the day of Cortes' death, (the 2d day of December, 1547,) but says he was sixty-three years of age. (p. 364.)

[57] Our author omits to mention anything about the third daughter. In these passages we cannot sufficiently admire the excellent feeling of the old soldier, which

was charitable to a degree; for though he had great reason to complain of the neglect he suffered from his hero Cortes, yet, after his death, he tries to raise him in your estimation, and he lets him die an honest man. (p. 365.)

[58] The famous general Gonsalo Hernandez de Cordoba. (p. 373.)

[59] The inns in Spain, which stand along the high roads at great distances from any town, are called ventas, and are mostly built by government. (p. 378.)

[60] This passage proves volumes for the honesty, judiciousness, and education of the author; for uneducated minds are fond of large numbers to create astonishment, but he takes the least number, while the so termed learned historians have not hesitated to employ ridiculous exaggerations. Gomara, for instance, says that 20,000 human beings were annually sacrificed to the idols within the circle of Cortes' conquests; according to others, 50,000. Herrera goes further, for he says that frequently from 5000 to 20,000 human beings were sacrificed in one day at Mexico and in the surrounding neighbourhood. (p. 388.)

[61] Respecting this celebrated artist, see a former note. (p. 391.)

[62] The inland trade of New Spain was considerable as early as in the year 1531. In the market of Tlascalla alone there were annually slaughtered from 14,000 to 15,000 sheep, 4000 oxen, and 2000 pigs. See Herrera.

The Spaniards must have been remarkably active in those days, for Cortes first arrived at San Juan de Ulloa in the year 1519; in August, 1521, he took the city of Mexico, which was converted into a heap of ruins by the siege; in the month of June, 1526, he returned from the Honduras, and there stood a new city, with many churches, cloisters, palaces, fortifications, and most probably also an amphitheatre for bull-fights. (p. 393.)

[63] Bernal Diaz had good reasons for his fears. The three volcanoes which lay in the vicinity, termed volcan de Agua, volcan de Fuego, and volcan de Paeaya, rendered the ground very unsafe, and the metropolis of this province was several times removed by the Spaniards. The present town of Guatimala, called La Nueva Guatemala de la Asuncion, lies in the plain of Mixco. For a further account of this town and the eruptions of the above-mentioned volcanoes, we must refer the reader to the work of Domingo Juarros, entitled, 'Compendio de la Historia de la Ciudad de Guatemala,' published at the latter place, 1809-1818. (p. 409.)

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